

THE STUDENT WORLD

UT OMNES UNUM SINT

This Oecumenical Year

SECOND QUARTER 1937

THE STUDENT WORLD

Serial Number 117

This Oecumenical Year

		Page
Editorial		
The Federation in this Oecumenical Year	V. 't H.	105
An Open Letter from Dr. J. H. Oldham on the Oxford Conference	J. H. Oldham	109
An Open Letter from the Archbishop of York on the Edinburgh Conference	William Temple	112
The Bible and Oecumenism	Suzanne de Dietrich	114
A Beginner's Guide to Oecumenism	Oliver S. Tomkins	123
The Great Misunderstanding	Denzil G. M. Patrick	129
Catholicism and Protestantism, A Catholic Viewpoint	Father M. J. Congar	142
Protestantism and Catholicism, A Protestant Viewpoint	Pierre Maury	149
The Essence of the Oecumenical Movement	L. A. Zander	157
Can Oxford speak to our Condition?	John C. Bennett	169
The Editor's Travel Diary	V. 't H.	179
Student World Chronicle :		
The Significance of the German Church Conflict for the Whole Church	Karl Barth	182
Book Reviews		192
Notes on Contributors and Articles		199

The *Student World* is published in January, April, July and October. The price of a single annual subscription, post paid, is 5s. ; 4.00 marks ; 5.00 Swiss francs ; \$1.50. Single Copies 2s. ; 1.20 mark ; 1.50 Swiss franc ; \$0.50. Subscriptions may be sent to any of the addresses given below :

Australia :	Student Christian Movement, 182, Collins Street, Melbourne.
Canada :	Student Christian Movement, 1164, Bay Street, Toronto 5.
China :	Kiang Wen-Han, 131, Museum Road, Shanghai.
France :	Fédération Française des A.C.E., 11, rue Jean-de-Beauvais, Paris V°.
Germany :	Reichsgeschäftsstelle der DCSV, Flensburgerstr. 9, Berlin N.W. 37
Great Britain and Ireland :	Miss Xenia Braikewitch, Annandale, Golders Green, London N. W. 11.
Holland :	Bureau N.C.S.V., Woudschoten, Woudenbergse Straatweg, Zeist.
India, Burma and Ceylon :	Student Christian Movement, 'Scaibac', Jamna, Allahabad.
New Zealand :	Student Christian Movement, 153, Featherston Street, Wellington, C.1.
South Africa :	F. J. Liebenberg, P.O. Box 25, Stellenbosch, Cape Province.
U.S.A. :	Student Y.M.C.A., 347, Madison Avenue, New York City.
	Student Y.W.C.A., 600, Lexington Avenue, New York City.

or to the general office of the World's Student Christian Federation, 13, rue Calvin, Geneva, Switzerland (Postal Cheque Account No. L3192).

The names of the various National and International Student Movements affiliated to the Federation, and also the addresses to which correspondence should be sent, are printed on the third page of this cover.

THE STUDENT WORLD

A quarterly magazine published at 13 Rue Calvin, Geneva
by the World's Student Christian Federation

Dr. W. A. VISSER 't HOOFT *Editor*

VOLUME XXX

Second Quarter, 1937

NUMBER 2

EDITORIAL

The Federation in this Oecumenical Year

In his address at the Birmingham Quadrennial, William Paton said that no institution had done more to make the universality of the Christian Church a reality than the World's Student Christian Federation. But since the Federation is a body which changes with disconcerting rapidity owing to the short life of its members, these words should be taken, not so much as a compliment, but as a challenge to our present membership. If it is true that in the past our Movement has been allowed to help toward a new understanding between the Christian Churches, and if it has in a very real sense been a training school for oecumenical leadership, the question arises whether the present generation of Christian students is still alive to this particular task.

In some ways it has become much harder for younger Christians to pioneer in oecumenical relationships. For we know now that oecumenism means, not simply that individual Christians of different backgrounds recognize each other as Christians, but that Christians, meeting as conscious members of their Churches, confront their convictions, and seek together

the unity of the Church of Christ. Now that our various oecumenical movements have come of age, they have lost that youthful naïveté which characterized them in their early days. It is far more difficult to understand the present oecumenical position of our Federation as formulated in recent years, than it is to understand the simple policy of the first period of Federation life. In the same way the Conferences at Oxford, Edinburgh and Hangchow will certainly be far more "theological" than the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, the Stockholm Conference of 1925, or the Lausanne Conference of 1927. The extraordinary complexity of the problem of unity, of common Christian action, has dawned upon us, and we have to accept its full implications. But the result is that there is less room for a general enthusiasm for unity, and more need for patient and persistent, non-dramatic action. At the same time, tendencies have appeared in student ranks which for various reasons dismiss all oecumenical work as a waste of time, for (as some would say) it weakens confessional consciousness, or (as others would say) it distracts attention from the one basic issue of personal Christian life, or (as still others would say) it has no direct relation to the urgent needs of society.

Should the Federation then consider that the oecumenical task should now be left to the older generation, and turn to what would seem to be more pressing tasks, such as those of evangelism and Christian social action? Through this number of The Student World the Federation would affirm its belief that its responsibility in the oecumenical realm is and remains one of its main responsibilities, and that not in opposition to its other tasks, but as their indispensable complement. Oecumenism is not, and has never been, a sort of special hobby for the Federation, but is an obligation and privilege which, as Suzanne de Dietrich shows us in her article, are rooted in the Biblical Revelation concerning the nature of the Christian community. We have no more right to disregard God's commandment of unity than we have to disregard His commandments of love and justice. And we have no more right to reject the gift of unity than we have to reject the gift of grace.

The very existence of our world movement of Christian

students depends on whether Christians of different confessions, different denominations and different theological backgrounds can live and work together without compromising their loyalties and convictions. If the Federation ceased to take the oecumenical issue seriously, that would in practice mean that it would become a confessional movement for those who are not interested in any particular confession. Thus it is clear that our evangelistic, social and other tasks can be adequately undertaken only if we face the question of Christian unity, both as it appears within our movement, and as it is studied and acted upon in the larger oecumenical movement.

But can we actually get anywhere in this realm of oecumenism? It is curious to notice that the same people who ask this question most insistently, are indignant if one asks them if we can get anywhere in the struggle against sin in personal and social life. Both questions are equally beside the point. We can get as far in this realm as in other realms, for we can attempt to do the Will of God and leave the results to God Himself.

It is true that the oecumenical situation seems today particularly static. The discussions between the various confessions, such as are carried on within our Federation and elsewhere, reveal greater and deeper differences than we had anticipated. If our readers will study the articles in this number by Father Congar, by Pierre Maury and by Denzil Patrick, they will probably feel less hopeful about possibilities of oecumenical understanding than they have ever felt before. The deeper one enters into this realm of differences (and there are many other important realms of divergence which this number cannot attempt to describe), the better one sees that our disagreements are based not merely on questions of secondary importance, but on issues which go to the heart of our whole conception of faith and life.

But there is another side, which has been specially emphasized in the articles of Zander and Tomkins, and which is also an essential part of our oecumenical experience in the Federation, namely, that as we enter truly into contact with one another, and seek to face together the truth of God, we sometimes make surprising discoveries about our relationship to one another.

God is a God of the living; and if we do not "make the Word of God of none effect through our traditions", that is, if we consider our positions, not as fortresses to be defended, but rather as temporary resting-places from which we are to journey onward, we find that other confessions represent truths through which we must let ourselves be questioned, called to order and corrected. And what is more, it may happen that we come to understand that somehow we are already one in Christ, in spite of all that seems to stand between us. God gives us here and now "instalments" of that oneness which in its full expression belongs to His Kingdom. But this unity is real only if it is arrived at, not at the expense of truth and through compromise, but rather as the result of a common wrestling to arrive at the truth, in which we have remained faithful to whatever God has revealed to us.

"This Oecumenical Year" will give us all, directly or indirectly, an opportunity to make up our minds about our attitude to the fact of our differences, and the oecumenical task which they imply. If we expect that Oxford and Edinburgh will "solve" the problem, we will be disappointed. These two meetings are no more than stages (very early stages) on a long journey, and it is not likely that they will lead to sensational developments. Their importance will reside, not in "solutions", but in clarifications, in furthering of the fertile conversation between the Churches, and in a common witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in an increasingly pagan world.

It may well be that many young Christians will become very impatient with the oecumenical movement, because it does not seem that this is enough in a world which needs so much more than words. That is all to the good, if this impatience finds expression, not in pharisaic and negative criticism, but in an attempt to bring the Churches (our own Churches) to a deeper consecration to God's Will, which stands for both truth and unity.

V. 't H.

An Open Letter from Dr. J. H. Oldham on the Oxford Conference

The significance of the Conference on Church, Community and State which will assemble at Oxford in July of this year lies in the first instance in the circumstances in which it will meet. The general situation in the world at the present time and the issues which it raises for the Church are sufficiently familiar. Apart from the multitude of other books and articles, they were impressively set forth in the last Number of *The Student World*. It is not necessary to speak of them again. For all to whom Christ is the Light of the World and who have compassion for mankind in its present perplexities, distresses and dangers, the gathering together at Oxford of representatives of the Christian Churches throughout the world must arouse interest and hope. Can there come through such a Conference a word from God which will help to give direction, guidance and inspiration to the Church?

A Conference as such is subject to severe limitations in what it can accomplish. A fortnight does not allow sufficient time for a large representative gathering to do more than touch the fringe of vast subjects. The Conference at Oxford is, however, only one link in a chain of continuing effort. More thorough preparation has been made for this gathering than for any previous international Christian meeting. This has been possible because, through the establishment of a Research Department at Geneva under the auspices of the Universal Christian Council, machinery which did not previously exist for bringing about an effective interchange of thought between the leading minds, lay as well as theological, in the Churches throughout the world, has been set up.

For the first time there has been available a staff to carry on an intensive work over a period of years. Nine major subjects related to the theme of the Conference have been studied in international cooperation during the past two or

three years. The results of this work will be available for the deliberations and thinking of the Oxford Conference. It is hoped that all the delegates will receive in May a volume on *The Church and its Function in Society*, and full memoranda on the subjects of the five sections into which the Conference will be divided, prepared by the Chairman of each Section with the help of a small group of advisers. These five sections will deal with the following subjects :

1. The Church and the Community
2. The Church and the State
3. Church, Community and State in Relation to the Social Order
4. Church, Community and State in Relation to Education
5. The Universal Church and a World of Nations.

Further, there will be published in the autumn of this year six volumes representing the results of the preparatory study which has been going on for the past two or three years. Many of the papers which will appear in these volumes will be available in mimeographed form or in proof for the delegates of the Conference in each section. The discussions at Oxford will therefore not start, so to speak, at scratch. Much progress will have been made in advance in clarifying many of the issues. A provisional statement will be in the hands of delegates when they meet ; and they will be able to build on the foundations that have thus been laid.

The preparatory work has revealed how wide and deep are the differences among Christians on many of the most fundamental issues. The encouraging thing, however, is that owing to the existence of the new machinery to which reference has been made, more progress has been made than ever before in elucidating these differences and in promoting mutual understanding. The Oxford Conference will, it is hoped, carry these processes further. If it succeeds in its task, there will be available a much clearer and fuller statement of what to Christian minds the crucial issues in the present situation are, and of the present state of Christian

thought regarding them. This will provide a foundation on which further work can be done in the future. The younger generation will be given a basis and starting-point for its thinking in the conclusions which represent the best Christian thinking of our time, so far as the work that has been done in preparation for the Oxford Conference, and the Conference itself, are able to give this expression.

It will not be without interest to readers of *The Student World* that the younger generation are taking an active part in the work of the Conference. W. A. Visser 't Hooft is the joint author of the volume on *The Church and its Function in Society*, to which reference has been made. H. P. Van Dusen, who has been deeply identified with the Student Christian Movement, has been directing the preparatory work in America, and William Paton, of whom the same is true, will be the secretary of the Section on the Universal Church and a World of Nations, while the Chairman of this Section will be John Mackay, who has spent the greater part of his life in work in the Universities in South America. The Chairman of the Section on Church, Community, and State in relation to the Social Order will be John Maud, and the secretary John Bennett, both of whom are happily still in the thirties. The same is true of the Directors of the Research Department at Geneva. In the galleries at Oxford 100 places will be reserved for representatives of youth movements throughout the world; and what goes on in their minds and hearts will not be the least important part of the Conference.

We believe it to be the case that something has been in progress during the past two or three years in the international interchange of thought which has never taken place before. Our trust is, however, not in the thoroughness of the preparatory work, which in itself need not advance things in the least, but solely in the goodness and mercy of God and in His purpose for the redemption of the world.

An Open Letter from the Archbishop of York on the Edinburgh Conference

My dear Visser 't Hooft,

I want to write to you about the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order, and to say why I think it matters so much to the younger generation of Christians. Some explanation of that is necessary, for they are liable to be very impatient with the older folk who seem to discuss for ever rather remote topics instead of getting on with the job. I have great sympathy with that view; I think we ought to find it much easier to unite, or at least to co-operate, than we do. And it is good for us to be hustled a little bit by folk whose idealistic disgust at the sluggishness of the Christian community has not yet been converted by familiarity into either alienation or complacency.

Most young Christians are likely to find about half of what we plan to do at Edinburgh rather tedious and out of touch with pressing needs. We are not going to discuss any of those questions which are threatening from month to month to bring the world about our ears. We are going to discuss the questions that at present prevent Christian people from becoming one visible society of men and women who believe in and worship one God through Jesus Christ. For until the different groups of Christians understand one another and either reach agreement on these points or else agree that difference of belief concerning them is compatible with unity of worship and work, the Church will remain divided and its witness to the world will be blunted by that fact. "Oxford" cannot be completely successful in what it aims at until "Edinburgh" has succeeded.

It may be said that Christians ought not to be kept apart by any of the things we shall discuss at Edinburgh — interpretations of the Doctrine of Grace, of the relations of the Word of God to the Church, of Ministry and Sacraments.

Surely, it is urged, the religion of Jesus is very simple, and men can join together in the practice of it without first arguing about all these theological conundrums.

Yes; in one sense the religion of Jesus is very simple, and if we were good enough — that is, free enough from all forms of self-interest and self-concern — we could unite across all barriers in the practice of it. But in fact our chief need is precisely that deliverance from self-concern which may make this possible. And in actual practice it is found that what gives, so to speak, a cutting edge to faith is definiteness in the conception of God and of His dealings with us. Definiteness, though not always logical definition, is indispensable to spiritual vigour; and it is in the effort to reach this that men come to differ.

We may agree to worship together. But to be effective our worship must be expressed in some form of words or actions; if these are very vague, all may agree to use them, but it will make little difference whether they do or not. If the forms are definite, the use of them may mean much, but it will be hard to secure agreement about them.

So the unity that we need for effective witness to the world really does require for its attainment that we either actually agree, or else that we deliberately agree to differ, about such questions as will be discussed at Edinburgh. And we cannot agree to differ unless each can see that the witness of the rest is supplementary to, and not contradictory of, his own. So far as we find that to be the fact, we can build up our common statement of belief and practice on the basis of which we can unite to give our witness to the world that so desperately needs that witness.

Pray for us then, so that we may have clear minds, steadfast wills and loyal hearts. We shall need all of these. But supremely it will be loyalty of heart — deeper loyalty to the One Lord — that will draw us together in fellowship and unity.

Yours ever,

William EBOR.

The Bible and Oecumenism

Suzanne de DIETRICH

To go to the Bible in order to find its answer to our problems is always a delicate thing to do. So many theories have been built up and sustained with Biblical quotations, carefully and quite genuinely chosen to suit the purpose !

The Bible never offers ready-made answers to any of our questions. Because "faith" is a dynamic, not a static reality, because we are always faced with the absolute of God's claim and calling on the one hand, and the world-as-it-is on the other, the full answer to any problem will always be of a paradoxical kind, bitterly realistic, and yet charged with expectancy, the expectancy of faith, "a firm conviction of things not seen", yet already *given*, actual and real.

In a short study like this we have to limit ourselves to a few remarks.

Our first remark will be that *the Bible knows of a man-made and of a God-given unity*. With the striking parallelism so often to be found between Old and New Testament stories, where the latter is a kind of reply to the former, and both illustrate the same truth, the Bible tells us how the unity of mankind came to an end, and how it was restored.

We are told that in the beginning "the whole earth was of one language and of one speech", and men started building a tower "whose top may reach unto heaven". But the Lord confounded their language and scattered them, and the whole undertaking ended in confusion (Gen. xi. 1-9). In the New Testament we see a few men waiting and praying until the fire of the Holy Spirit descends upon them; in the power of the Spirit *they are made one*, and the immediate expression of God's gift is that "every man heard them speaking in his own language".

Now, we are today in a "Tower-of-Babel age". We are faced with world-wide ideological movements aflame with

the conviction that they are building up a new world-order, and bringing Heaven to earth; there is much of the old Promethean and Babylonian dream in these "fronts", obeying the same watch-words the world over, and claiming to "save" our civilization. Will not one of the temptations of the Oecumenical Movements in Christendom be to stand up, and hastily build a united front and a defensive tower of their own, which will be a *man-made one*? And we may even do so with the delusion that we are doing God's work, naïvely projecting our wishes into Heaven, and then labelling them "the call of the hour". The Bible faces us here with its unshakable realism, and tells us that man-made unity ends in confusion. And once unity is broken, it can be restored only from above.

The Bible knows of a God-given inclusiveness, and of a God-imposed exclusiveness; the inclusiveness of Love, the Love of Him who was lifted up from the earth in order to draw all men unto Himself (John xii. 32); the exclusiveness of Truth, the Truth which cuts in order to free (Is. xlix. 2; Hebr. iv. 12). The Lord of peace holds a sword: "Think ye that I am come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division" (Luke xii. 51; cf. Rev. i. 1). Thus, our vocation as revealed in the Bible is one of unity; but the temporary process may be one of separation.

As soon as God enters the realm of history, and lays His hand on a man and on a people, that man becomes a "man of God", that people the "People of God" and a process of separation and sifting begins. We must acknowledge that the "cutting off" of Israel from the nations is conducted at times in a rather drastic and thoroughgoing way. There are crucial moments in history when sharp distinctions are for the Church of God a question of life and death. When the great Prophets of the 9th and 8th Centuries B.C. appear on the scene, Israel has settled among the foreign nations, and a tremendous process of absorption — today we should say, of "syncretism" — is going on. The prophetic message is one of sharp exclusiveness: an uncompromising stand for God as the One Lord besides Whom there is no other. Yet it is also in the prophetic message that we find for the first

time the eschatological hope of a forthcoming God-given unity, when the house of the Lord will be established in the top of the mountains, "and all nations shall flow unto it" (Is. ii. 2, cf. lv. 5).

A similar crucial moment is to be found in the early centuries of the Christian era, when the Church is faced with the syncretistic tendencies of the Graeco-Roman world; the struggle is already beginning in St. Paul's time. The Church has to define her position sharply in order to preserve the uniqueness of her message, and she knows that in this struggle her very existence is at stake.

Now the question is : Are we not entering one of these "danger periods" today ? Are not forces from without and from within — caesarism and syncretism — challenging the unique Lordship of the Lord Jesus Christ ? And does this not sometimes happen so insidiously that we are not aware of our drifting ?

The Apostolic Church knew of only One Name wherein we may be saved. On this corner-stone her faith was built (Acts iv. 11-12). Will the Oecumenical Movements build on that rock, or on the shifting sands of human good-will ? Jawaharlal Nehru says somewhere of Protestantism, that it has become a this-worldly power which "ends in sentimentality and business"; this hard judgment of an outsider may well challenge our thinking; nowhere is this danger more real than in certain so-called Oecumenical Movements. We want to prove "broadminded". We think rather in terms of efficiency than in terms of a God-given Revelation. Let us realize that this is a crucial issue for the Church of God today.

The Bible knows of an exclusiveness which is of God, and of an exclusiveness which is of men. God has the right to "separate". We have not.

Can we draw the line between uncompromising submission to God's Truth and sinful, earthly divisions, between obedience and sectarianism ?

The prophet, the "man of God", often stands alone : helplessly tied by God's Word, and unable to free himself hand or foot. But there he stands in the midst of his people,

one of them, carrying the burden of their sins. He never cuts himself off; he may, of course, be cast out, or killed. Might one not say that sectarianism begins when the "faithful" take upon themselves the initiative of separation? They go off, carrying God's truth with them as a kind of owned possession. A typical instance of this seems to me to be the case of the Pharisees. They certainly "separate" in order to keep what they believe to be the true faith; but very soon their attitude towards truth becomes one of "possessiveness", which ends in spiritual pride and self-sufficiency. Is it not this *possessiveness* which seemed to Jesus so blasphemous? His own attitude towards the Father is one of utter dependence; He "does nothing of himself" (John v. 19). He embodies the Eternal Truth of God; He is The Truth; and yet in some mysterious way He remains free from any possessive attitude.

Sectarianism always expresses itself practically in casting judgments on others. This again meets with Jesus' strongest condemnation (Matt. vii. 1-5). Only the Lord of the harvest is entitled to tear out the tares (Matt. xiii. 24-30). Twice the disciples are warned against rash action (Luke ix. 49-56). Jesus rejecteth no one. Power is given unto Him to speak God's word. And those who receive it not are not excluded: they exclude themselves (John xii. 47-48).

In the last days of His earthly life, Jesus' thought seems to centre more and more on the little community He is leaving behind — the Church of tomorrow. And again and again, with grave and sad earnestness, He warns his disciples against two evils: domination and division (Mark ix. 33-35, x. 35-45; Luke xxii. 24-27; John xiii. 12-17, 34-35; John xvii). How distinctly our Lord sees into the future! How realistically he sees the disruptive forces at work!

The new Church, sealed by the Holy Spirit, starts in unity: "they were all of one heart and one soul". But very soon the struggle begins. The far-seeing missionary mind of St. Paul has grasped the full implications of the Gospel of salvation by faith; the conservative and narrow-minded Jerusalem community has not, and sticks to the Jewish tradition. A vital issue is at stake; the Church is

on the verge of a break. Finally it is agreed that each party will go the way it believes to be the true one, and trust the other. Compromise? It might be one. But when one reads St. Paul's letter to the Galatians, still hot with the fire of the battle, one senses a tremendous inward struggle: these men have gone through agonizing searching of heart in order to preserve both the integrity of God's message — as they grasped it — and the unity of the Church. And they finally have come to an agreement, *not* by way of mutual concession, but because each of them acknowledged that the other had received his calling *from God* (Gal. ii. 7). Their Gospel had been intrusted to them by the Lord Himself.

Thus — and this is very fundamental for any oecumenical undertaking — the apostles did not make a piece of patch-work in order to adjust each other's beliefs. They became aware of their common calling and trusted Him who had called them to lead them further.

Every true oecumenical experience is an opening of our eyes to the reality of our common calling in Christ Jesus; an awareness of our unity in Him as something given, actual and real, transcending all our differences. The basic fact which makes this unity real and our working together possible is the fact that it is He who calls us: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you" (John xv. 16). A day has come when He laid His hand upon us. This means He has ceased to be a leader we may follow or drop of our own choice, and has become the one authority under which we stand, the one Lord to whom we have surrendered our lives. Never mind how much or how little we know, as long as He has taken the lead and we have truly given up the mastery of our own lives: "Faithful is He that calleth you". (I Thess. v. 24).

In a time like ours, when so many masters claim men's allegiance and on the other hand so many souls claim to be their own master, the Christian community is slowly coming to a new awareness of what it means to be "Christ's slaves" and to stand tied by His Word and chained to His Will in a world which knoweth Him not.

And here we meet with another dialectical truth : *the unity of the Church of God is both a fact and a promise* : something already given ; something to be prayed and strived for.

The Church is One and Catholic. She can be nothing else, because she has One Lord, she shares in one and the same forgiveness, in one and the same life, in one and the same hope. " There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling ; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all " (Eph. iv. 4-6). " There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female : for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus " (Gal. iii. 28).

The Church is one in her essence, by the very nature of her calling. Her Lord has sealed her unity with a double seal : His blood and His Spirit. All those He has marked with that seal belong to her.

The Church is also all-inclusive in her hope. She claims the whole of mankind for God, " who willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, one Mediator also between God and man, himself a man. Christ Jesus, who gave himself in ransom for all " (I Tim. ii. 4-5). In her hope, in her prayers the Church shares in the all-inclusive Love of God, and ceaselessly waits for the consummation of the ages when God will be " all in all ".

On the Day of Pentecost the unity of the Church was manifested ; an outward " sign " was given to her of her eternal vocation to unite in Christ Jesus all the nations of the earth. And soon after we are told that " the multitude of them who believed were of one heart and soul ". But it did not last. And that is why the Church " One and Catholic " is part of our *Creed* : a truth to be accepted in faith ; but at the same time something to be prayed and suffered and striven for ; we are reminded every time we confess our faith that our divisions are sin in the sight of God, and that we should strive to remove them. When St. Paul says : " there can be neither Jew nor Greek... ", he means that the Church of

God knows of no such distinctions if she is true to her calling. We must face the fact that she is not. We must face the fact that both her state of division, and her racial and social discriminations, are a scandal to the world. Our Lord foresaw the terrible consequences of our trespassing against His commandment when He prayed that His disciples be made one "that the world may know that thou didst send me" (John xvii. 21).

He knew that the world would test the reality of their discipleship by their mutual love and forbearance. His aim was not only to call individual men to follow Him, but rather to create a new type of society, a new type of relationship, an organic whole which by its very existence would reveal itself to the world as fundamentally different from all earthly, men-constructed societies; a unity which would not be based on uniformity, but rather be the living unity due to the fact of one and the same sap pulsing through all the branches of the vine.

In a time when men are craving for some form of integrated community life, how could one escape the thought that the Church of Christ, because of her divisions, has failed to reveal to the world the secret of a truly organic unity which she was the only one to possess?¹

At the root of all oecumenical endeavour there must be nothing less than a conversion of heart and mind for all concerned. It must be given us to see all things no longer in our own perspective, but in the perspective of God's Kingdom. St. Paul, exhorting the Philippians to live in unity, told them they should grow into the likeness of Jesus, who emptied Himself in order to become one of us, and took

¹ We have lost the reality of an organic unity where there is "diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit"; where those who command and those who obey, do so in inward submission to one and the same Spirit. Since the Body of the Church has been rent asunder, first by the Great Schism, and later at the time of the Reformation, the living tension which makes for truly organic unity has ceased to exist. There has been a West and an East. In the West, the Roman conception has become more and more "authoritarian", tending towards superimposed uniformity of belief; the Protestant conception has tended towards a more and more humanized conception of freedom (there is a reaction now), leading to a state of division bordering upon anarchy.

Is not the need of the world today for a community of "persons" tied by an inward bond strong enough to keep them both united and free?

the form of a servant. — To pray and strive for unity means emptying ourselves of our self-sufficiency, pride and prejudices. A Swiss author¹ has said : “ *Le ‘ nous ’ est plus haïssable que le ‘ moi ’, car le moi garde quelque pudeur, le ‘ nous ’ n’en a aucune* ”. We are ready to acknowledge our trespasses as individuals; but we are generally much less ready to acknowledge them as a group, be it a racial, a national or a religious community. Our first step towards unity should be to expose ourselves to the chastening rod of the Spirit of God in searching self-examination. The next step should be to learn to see the other, not in our own perspective, but in the perspective of God’s calling *to him*. This stops all depreciatory and hasty judgment. “ Who art thou who judgest the servant of another? To his own Lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand : for the Lord has power to make him stand ” (Rom. xix. 4).

This changed attitude of mind will not wipe out our differences; but it may help us to see more clearly what is of God and what is of man in our own conceptions : it will help us to see what is of God in the others. Even if it makes us realize more sharply the real lines of cleavage, it will arouse in us no taste for polemics, but rather an intense longing to open ourselves, and help others to open themselves, to the fullness of God’s truth.

We shall never remove our divisions if we do not take them very earnestly; if we are not ready to undergo all the tensions our search for true unity implies. We have sometimes spoken in our Student Conferences of “ agonizing together ” to find the truth. Let us not take such words lightly : *do we really know what they mean ?... St. Paul knew. He bore the sins of the Christian community as being his own. He truly shared in His Master’s suffering for His Body, the Church (Col. i. 14). “ Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I burn not ?... ”*

The way to unity is a narrow way, not a broad and smooth one. There can be no “ gentlemen’s agreement ” where

¹ Félix Bovet.

God's truth is at stake. True love cannot claim for the other anything less than the fullness of God's truth.

But how could the way be other than narrow ? There is only one Church, because there is only One Cross ; thus the way to unity will always be the way of the Cross. If we took Christ's Death seriously, we should have to take a unity thus sealed seriously too.¹ Our difficulty is that we are so desperately blind to the fact that the other, every " other ", is " the brother for whose sake Christ died ".

Our Lord left many instructions to His disciples ; but on the unity of the Church He did not speak ; He *prayed*. If anything should call us to repentance and supplication, it should be this fact. But His prayer also gives us a deep insight into what He meant by our being " one ". There is a mystery in His words, deep as the mystery of the Trinity itself. He wants us to be one with Him and with one another as He Himself is one with the Father.

This closes the way to all human " transactions " in matters of so-called oecumenical policy ; it throws us back on God's mercy and succour, on Him who when all ways are closed — when we have come to the point of realizing they are all closed — can open one.

¹ In the Federation General Committee at St. Beatenberg, soon after the War, our movement seemed on the verge of a break. And it was the vision of ' Christ and Him crucified ' which brought us together. One delegate after the other stood up and said what Christ Crucified meant to him.

A Beginner's Guide to Oecumenism

OLIVER S. TOMKINS

It was at my first Federation Conference in 1930 that I became an "oecumaniac", and I have been trying ever since to understand what it was that began for me there. The word "Oecumenism" is not yet recognized by that supreme arbiter, the Oxford English Dictionary, but long entrenched in the *argot* of the Federation; and the great Conferences of 1937 and 1938 are forcing thousands of Christian people to realize that it stands for something that is *happening* in the world, whatever we care to call it. At Vaumarcus in 1930 the American who led our group called it "groping for an emphasis". The phrase was ambitious. The "oecumenical group" at that Conference was supposed to look at all the different expressions of Christianity represented there, and see if it could find in them anything that could be called the "Message of the Federation". That was in the glorious days when Americans, on the crest of the 1929 boom, felt they were "bringing in the Kingdom of God" at unprecedented speed; when the voice of Karl Barth first came booming across Europe, not very distinct as yet, but already uncomfortably insistent on such things as sin; when the British on the whole had American ideals but were increasingly prepared to dress them in the decent clothes of evangelical language; when the Russian Orthodox were for most still just interesting refugees, who had a bewildering habit of lapsing into obscurantist affirmations about the Faith of the Church. "Groping for an emphasis" was certainly about all that could be expected from a group like that, and "oecumaniac" was a fitting pun to express the lunacy of trying to do it at all.

But the necessity to try was inescapable. When we prayed together, heard the Bible together, listened to the

Faith expounded, we *knew* that beneath all differences it was the same Lord who had called us. In that paradox lies the command and the task of oecumenism. Oecumenism is our answer to the Divine Imperative to realize the unity we cannot express.

Confession and the Confessions

The problem only arises at all because God is always known to the individual soul through the witness of other souls. For every Christian there is always this double reality : the reality of his own knowledge of God and the reality of the living tradition in which his own little knowledge was born and must grow.

Some people are very little aware of what they owe to others, or acknowledge their debt, not in any terms of great religious tradition, but only in terms of a person here and a person there to whom they owe their growth in faith. Indeed, the influences may often seem to have nothing to do with traditional confessions. I know a good Anglican who saw Christ first through the combined influence of a Quaker and a Roman Catholic ! Or, much more decisive than the influence of the words or life of any person may have been the effect of reading the Bible, or even of some immediate, mystical apprehension of the reality of God. Other people are primarily conscious not so much of any debts to individuals as of having been wrapped round by the living tradition of their church, growing, fast or slowly, in their understanding of its store of faith and wisdom. But in either case this duality is present, the small, partial, but real and indisputable traffic of the soul with God, and the large, accumulated, modifying environment of the Christian confessions. Even those who are anxious to do so, cannot escape the fact of the confessions. If they attempt to choose things that *appeal* to them from here and there, to be broadminded and honorary members of several denominations but committed to none, they find that such a position can only be held at the price either of wilful inconsistency or of arrested development. The great Christian traditions are so much

bigger, stronger, wiser, better — as well as more wrong and more cruel — than any individual can be, that at the inevitable moment when, in their living, historical reality, they rise up and challenge the individual's eclecticism, they can be ignored only if the individual either holds blindly on to irreconcilable positions or refuses to let the wisdom of the past expand the horizons of his own short experience.

It is not merely that for *practical* purposes it is necessary to go to church somewhere, so you might as well settle down to some particular congregation. Much more than that, the way in which things are done and said in any congregation is the symbol of a whole tradition, big or little, of belief about the dealings of God with men. That is still true, even if the tradition is that it does not matter how things are done and said. It is this paradox of the confession of individual faith necessarily within the confession of a corporate tradition that creates oecumenism; for oecumenism is the conflict of traditions in their corporateness apprehended by believers in their individuality. To put it a little less pompously, Anglicanism and Calvinism in many ways conflict; but the conflict takes on religious importance only when an Anglican and a Calvinist discover that it is their *common* faith in God about which they disagree.

Stages on the Road

Oecumenism is a pilgrimage of faith; and those who go out know not whither they go, trusting only the promises they have received, following a path that lies not only before all who say: "I believe in One Holy Catholic Apostolic Church", but equally inevitably before those who say: "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life".

But already there is in our time a *tradition* of oecumenism; to many of us the great Conferences of 1937 and 1938 express not merely isolated interests known as Life and Work, Faith and Order, the International Missionary Council, but *the* oecumenical movement. Because this quest for wholeness, catholicity, is inherent in Christianity, it is no new thing. The unity in diversity of the early Church, the

age of the great Councils, and, dialectically, the age of the schisms, all belong equally to it. But in our own day, through a multitude of ways, God seems to be calling the Church to a new and widespread determination to realize its true unity. And, as within confessional life, so within oecumenical experience, there is the dual reality of tradition and individual apprehension.

Perhaps it is now possible to trace three distinct stages through which the individual is likely to pass on his pilgrimage to reach even that place in the desert where the pillar of fire stands for this generation !

The first stage is one of naïve surprise at the reasonableness of other traditions and a consequent optimism of a quick solution. Such is the legacy of religious history, in which men have fought each other for peace, and hated each other for the love of God, that many have grown up to think it a crime even to try to understand a traditional opponent, or at least regard him as, in some subtle way, less than human. When personal encounter takes place, then love of man for man may disconcertingly abolish prejudice and sheer common humanity disarm suspicion. To this naïve puppyhood of oecumenism belong such staggering remarks as : " The lesson was read by a Baptist — and I must admit he read it extraordinarily well ", or " It's true he was a monk, but he had quite a good sense of humour ". The natural temptation that follows this discovery of the possibilities of admiration, friendship and love is to hope that after all the whole difficulty was based only on misunderstandings, and that a little more friendship will resolve it all. Meanwhile, it is enough to like the other man *in spite of* his differences, and either slur over his peculiar point of view or assume that it is only his way of putting what *you* mean.

But that optimism will not stand the weight of facts. Closer fellowship is followed by each tradition's having to define itself more clearly, simply in order that both unity and divergence may be truly revealed. Then comes the painful discovery that there are differences which cannot be explained away. Right at the heart of our common faith stand deep disagreements, on the nature of man himself,

on the manner of God's self-revelation, on the character of the means of grace and of the hope of glory. Everyone who has had to leave a friend either inside or outside the Communion of the Lord's Supper knows that friendship does not abolish but deepens the pain of being sundered one from another at that very point where we had hoped for unity.

When the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood in the midst of them; and still He works that miracle for those who have passed through the pain of this second stage, and gives His presence in a way that could not otherwise be known. Just when all progress seems to be barred and the door irrevocably locked, those who thought they were divided *know* that they are at one in a way which defies expression. They know, they know not how, that the same Lord who called them called also those from whom they differ.

This leads to the hardest of the lessons of oecumenism, because it means that we must love those of another confession not in spite of their convictions, but *because* of them; not because we like them for their human qualities, but because we find them in the love of Christ. It is easy to be sentimental at this point by applying the rule only to situations other than our own. In that spirit to seek to meet those on our own doorstep who, claiming Christ as Lord, seem also to deny all that we mean by our faith, is to be achieved only through a very humble and patient waiting upon God.

What next ?

Where does the road lead to next ? Perhaps we have no right to ask. To tread the path our feet are already in, is task enough; to hold at once the double allegiance to truth and love. It may be that the tension is unresolvable. The price of the unity we have been given was rigorous honesty; the consequence of honesty was to recognize division. To throw away honesty would be to throw away such unity as we have.

So we must go on being honest; and one thing that honesty will compel us to admit is that the divisions are not simple or even fixed. It is true that the classical confessions

have enormous power; but they were wrought in concrete historical situations, and other historical situations modify them. Already the traditional differences are overlaid by other differences forced on us from the world itself. Just as in one of its aspects the Reformation was an attitude to the dissolution of feudalism as well as an agent in it, so today the Christian attitude to an equally searching social crisis is cutting across traditional loyalties. There is much talk today of the Church finding its unity in martyrdom; let us not forget that martyrs before now have been the victims of fratricidal conflict within the ranks of professing Christians themselves. We have no right to demand that history for us shall be less tragic than the history of our fathers.

We can only go on, as we began — in faith. God has compelled us to seek this unity, and at every stage He has given it a body according to His will. It may be that He will give us some way of expressing that unity we have known but cannot define, without being untrue to the terms upon which we have received it. Theology has always been the formulation of something men knew already by experience. Meanwhile, it is enough to know that if we abide in the Vine we shall bear fruit, and the fruit will remain.

The Great Misunderstanding

DENZIL G. M. PATRICK

At Conferences of the W.S.C.F. and elsewhere, the two groups which find it most difficult to understand one another theologically, and between which it is most difficult to interpret, are the Anglo-Saxons and the Continentals. This article will attempt to disclose some of the causes of this difficulty — causes which lie far deeper than linguistic differences, and of which the undoubtedly great differences in historical and national tradition do not afford a sufficient explanation.

There are two main sets of causes — one set pertaining to the *method* of approach to theology, and the other set pertaining to the *content* of theology itself. The first set can best be illustrated by a criticism, from a Continental point of view, of a very prevalent Anglo-Saxon attitude to *natural theology*; and the second set can best be illustrated by a comparison of the views held on either side concerning the *nature of the Christian life*.

It must be made clear from the outset that it is not intended to imply that all Anglo-Saxons and all Continentals think alike! The attitudes described here are simply those which are typical of the more vocal groups of younger theologians on either side, Anglicans on the one hand and Barthians on the other. In the empirical situation, there do of course exist many Continentals who hold an extreme view of natural theology, along the lines indicated here as Anglo-Saxon; and there also exist many Anglo-Saxons who hold the view of the Christian life here described as Continental. But the general distinction is convenient, and not unduly inaccurate.

An Anglo-Saxon Attitude to Natural Theology

The general difference between the Continental and the Anglo-Saxon approach to theology has been shortly described

as that between the *a priori* deductive method and the *a posteriori* inductive method. The Continental habit of thought is to set up (or accept) a principle (or a fundamental revealed truth), draw from it all possible valid conclusions, and criticize other principles and systems according to whether the conclusions to which they lead agree or do not agree with the conclusions from the principle which (as an axiom of reason or a conviction of faith) has been accepted as true. The Anglo-Saxon habit of thought, on the other hand, is to begin by setting up not a principle, but only a working hypothesis in relation to a concrete problem, and to pursue investigation into truth by way of the "induction of particulars", modifying the hypothesis in the process until it has attained the greatest possible approximation to absolute validity. This method is adopted in the study first of all of inorganic nature, then of organic nature, then of human life (psychology, ethics and social sciences, metaphysics, religion and theology). What has been found true at any one stage on this way is taken as the working hypothesis which is to serve as a basis for further study as the next higher level — with such modifications as the changed nature of the subject-matter may suggest.

This difference of approach is one of the influences which determines the attitude adopted towards, and the value attached to, natural theology — i.e., the study of a general revelation of God in nature, conscience and history, which forms the basis of, and leads up to, the special Revelation in Christ. In Continental Protestantism, this subject is very seriously called in question, especially in the circles influenced by the thought of Karl Barth. In Anglo-Saxon theology, on the other hand, this subject is given a good deal of attention, as a kind of *praeparatio evangelica* — as one stage in the growing receptiveness and responsiveness of natural reality as such to the influence of its Creator. Its study may be undertaken upon the basis of the Oxford philosophical tradition (as in Temple's *Nature, Man and God*), or upon the basis of the Cambridge scientific tradition (as in Tennant's *Philosophical Theology*); but in either case it is directed towards demonstrating by inference from the natural world

the reasonableness of Revelation. The Christian Revelation thus becomes one illustration (the greatest) of a general principle of revelation; and the form taken by redemption becomes the logical conclusion to be drawn from the development of creation.

The uncritical application of the inductive method must however be called in question. Any natural theology which attempts to climb inductively through nature and man to God is putting the cart before the horse; it forgets that natural theology is a product of Christianity, not *vice versa*. And so it is involved all along the line in the logical fallacy of *petitio principii*. It would not arrive at the Christian Revelation as its ultimate term if that Revelation were not one of the implicit assumptions from which it had set out. (We can see that illustrated in the fact that non-Christian works on natural theology always arrive at their writer's own position as their ultimate term.) That is to say: The natural theologian, being in a certain position to which the Christian Revelation has brought him, throws down the ladder by which he has climbed, and attempts the task of climbing up some other way!

If there be any such thing as a Christian natural theology, it must be based on Revelation, or on the supernatural. In Christianity, the Revelation, or the supernatural, is not the thing one arrives at; it is the thing one starts out from, since without it, natural theology would never have been thought of! All Christian theology (including natural theology) is based, not on the upward-striving Platonic *Eros*, but on the downward-moving Divine *Agape*.

A further very dangerous weakness of the kind of natural theology we are dealing with is that it does not take sufficiently seriously the demonic element in nature (inanimate, animate and human). It does not take adequate account of the fundamental ambiguity of the conclusions to be drawn from a study of nature. It tends to explain optimistically (i.e., to explain away) the existence and the power of evil in the world. And hence (unlike Pascal, and Kierkegaard, and Dostoevsky) it is entirely unrealistic, and fails humanity in the hour of its greatest need. A little parable from Kierkegaard's *Entweder-Oder* illustrates this point:

“ ‘ One must never lose courage ; when troubles tower most frightfully over one, then one sees in the clouds a helping hand. ’ So said the Reverend Jesper Morten in his last Afternoon Service. Now, I am accustomed to go about a great deal in the open air ; but I have never noticed anything of that kind. Some days ago, while on a cross-country ramble, I became aware of such a phenomenon. It was indeed not like a hand, but like an arm, stretching forth out of the clouds. I sank into a reverie. It occurred to me : ‘ If only Jesper Morten were here, to decide whether he meant this phenomenon ! ’ — While I was right in the midst of these thoughts, I was accosted by a wanderer, who pointed up to the clouds and said : ‘ Do you see the waterspout ? It is not often seen in these parts. Sometimes it carries away whole houses. ’ ‘ Oh, God preserve us ! ’ thought I ; ‘ Is that a waterspout ? ’ And I ran away as fast as I could. What do you think the Reverend Pastor Jesper Morten would have done ? ”

As Kierkegaard has said elsewhere, it is quite true that Nature is the Work of God ; but what is immediately present to our observation is only the Work, not God Himself. God Himself remains hidden from our eyes. And even in His Revelation, He remains hidden, in such a way that the wisdom of the wise cannot attain unto Him.

But that is by no means all. This type of natural theology pretends to construct on natural premises a rational system by which man can penetrate to the very threshold of the Divine Mysteries. And there it oversteps the limits of human reason. Of every human philosophical system Pascal's words hold good, that all its premises or principles are true, but its conclusions are false, because it has ignored the existence of contrary truths, which are equally true but inconvenient for the construction of the system in question.

At this point we are irresistibly reminded of the philosophical vocation of Socrates — the greatest breaker-down of unsound assumptions that has ever lived. Plato and his system receive more honour than the simple, wise old man

who taught him. And yet, the criticizer of systems is greater than the builder of systems; for the former *indicates* the limitations of reason, whereas the latter *conceals* them. And while the former is sure to *receive* misunderstanding (and a cup of hemlock), he will never *produce* the misunderstanding which is the gravest risk of the latter. Honour is given to him that flatters us; but honour belongs to him that humbles us.

The most important thing for any natural theology to do is what it is most tempted not to do : to humble the pretentious claims of proud reason (*abaisser la superbe* ! as Pascal said). The most reasonable thing for reason to do (as Pascal has said once again) is to disavow its own competency to unravel the final knot of man's condition here on earth. There are many things it can do, and ought to do ; but here — it must know when to bow its proud head.

Further : if natural theology pursues the *a posteriori* inductive method, it can never arrive at anything more than *approximations* to certainty. It can never be *quite* sure. Something exceptional *may* be just round the corner (indeed, it always is !). And in relation to that which is Absolute, approximations are of no use *at all*. One is either absolutely certain, or absolutely uncertain. There is no middle way. And the maxim of Bishop Butler : “ Probability is the guide of life ”, has less than nothing to do with the Christian Gospel of absolute self-giving Love.

Still further : Christianity (which the natural theologian ought also in his own way to be trying to proclaim) is meant, not to satisfy the vanity of the healthy-minded who believe all things are within their grasp, but to meet the deep distress of the neurotic who have no more confidence in themselves and see the shallowness of human endeavour.

And finally : it should never be our concern (and this is the very greatest temptation of natural theology) to demonstrate the philosophical respectability of the Cross of Christ. The foolishness of the Cross is the ultimate answer to all the pretensions of human wisdom. The wise in their wisdom may ignore it ; but if they do, they shall for ever be ignorant of God. For the Absolute of philosophy is not the God of

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the sovereign who rules with a rod of — love !

The great truth to which Anglo-Saxon thought of the type we have been discussing fails to do justice is the *scandal*, the *offence* of Christianity ; and the great debt we owe to the Continental intransigent transcendentalists is that they bear unmovable witness to that *scandal* — *ne evacuetur sit crux* — lest the Cross of Christ be made of none effect. (Whether or no their witness be one-sided is quite a different question. It is too easy to criticize a theologian for being one-sided in order to avoid facing that one side of truth for which he stands.) Even if we accept the thesis that grace does not destroy nature, but fulfils it, we must also assert that this is knowable only by faith, on the basis of that grace itself ; and that the fulfilment is a dialectical one (because of the demonic element in nature) — a fulfilment which not only allows of but even demands a certain asceticism in relation to nature !

The true method of procedure, if we desire to do justice to every aspect of the human situation and yet do not desire to deny the possibility of a Christian natural theology, would seem to the writer to be the following. — First of all, the theologian should engage upon an attack against the entrenchments of human *hybris* — the arrogance of reason — by breaking down its defences, criticizing human systems of thought, showing the unanswerable antinomies in which they are involved in relation to reality (however logical they may be within their own limits). The essential fact, so often misrepresented by natural theology, is that it is not Christianity which must stand at the bar of human thought, but human thought which must stand at the bar of Christianity. Advocacy of Christianity is an advocacy for the prosecution, not for the defence ! Then the theologian should proceed to a positive evangelism — a proclamation of the Truth as it is in Jesus. And upon *that* basis, he may then proceed to a constructive interpretation of nature, showing how the truth in each system is taken up and transcended in the Christian view, where the pride of reason is lowered and its

auxiliary character recognized. *In faith — not before faith — all things* are ours; and we are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

* * *

But the deepest reason for which the Continental cannot accept the Anglo-Saxon estimate of natural theology is not one of *method*. The Continental would criticize the Catholic natural theology, with its supernatural basis, just as severely as he criticizes the Anglo-Saxon humanistic natural theology. The ultimate divergence is one of *content* — the view taken of creation, sin, redemption. And in order that the Continental view may not appear merely from the negative side, it is best to start out from its conception of the nature of the Christian life. The specific conception we shall discuss is that held by the Barthian school of thought, as that is at once the most definite and the most misunderstood modern statement of the theology of the Reformation.

A Continental View of the Christian Life

Man, having been created in the image of God, has had that image not only spoiled and stained throughout but annihilated through the Fall. He is thus no longer capable of having any knowledge of God apart from Jesus Christ. When the Revelation in Christ takes place, as a unique, unrepeatable and uncontinuable Divine event, the Divine grace enables man to have faith in God through Christ, to lay hold upon the Divine promises which are Yea and Amen in Christ, and to express his faith in specific acts of obedience to the Word of God. God is really present in the life of the believer. That presence, however, does not imply any *ontological* change in the nature of the believer during the course of this present life, while he is in a state of grace; any such change is reserved for the state of glory — the future fulfilment of all the promises of God, when the last enemy, death, shall have been destroyed. The presence which is actually operative now within man's life is an *eschatological* one; and precisely because it is eschatological,

it is *real* and *personal*, in the way which is proper to the revealed character of God, as no ontological presence could be.

Now we must examine the meanings of the terms *real*, *eschatological*, and *ontological*; for upon our understanding at this point depends our understanding, not only of the relations between Anglo-Saxons and Continentals, but of the Reformation, and of the abiding issue at stake between Catholicism and Protestantism.

a) The word *real* is used in so many senses that it is highly ambiguous: it may mean actual (*wirklich*), proper (*eigentlich*), essential (*wesentlich*). And it is important to keep these distinctions in mind when discussing the doctrine of the *real presence* of Christ in His Body, the Church, and in the believer. The question at issue in all theological controversy is not *whether* Christ is really present (there is unanimity between orthodox Protestantism and Catholicism that He *is*), but *how* He is present — what mode of presence is *proper*, not only to His real nature, but to the present condition of man. It is at this point that a fundamental decision (*Urentscheidung*) must be made; this is the cross-roads from which there are only two roads — one to the Geneva of Calvin, the other to Rome. There may be hotels along the way in either direction; but Geneva and Rome are the only ultimate spiritual homes for those who have once decided which way they are going to turn.

The Continental Reformation decided that the proper mode of the real presence of Christ in His Church and in the believer was an *actual* and *eschatological* presence, but not at all an *essential* one, in the *ontological* sense of that word. The Catholic Church decided to continue its affirmation that the proper mode of the real presence was primarily an *ontological* and *essential* one, the *eschatological* and *actual* aspects of the presence being not constitutive, but only complementary elements in it.

b) *Eschatology* is the doctrine concerning the last things, or *the coming age* (a better phrase than "the world to come" to express the significance of the original terms) of God's

sovereignty. This age can be inaugurated only by Divine action, not by human effort (the attitude of human beings towards the Divine action — faith or unbelief — being determinative only of whether that action is to involve final judgment or final salvation). It is transcendent; but that is a different thing from temporal futurity. There is a quite definite sense in which it is really present to man in time. The question, once again, concerns the *mode* of the presence of this, the Kingdom of God. The Continental Reformation answered that its presence is *actual*, as the Word of God (the eternal *Logos*) speaks through the Spirit to the Church and calls forth in the believer the decision of faith which expresses itself in concrete acts of obedience. The Catholic Church answered that its presence is not only actual, but also *ontological*, and that the Church militant is not only a witness to the Kingdom, but an ontological embodiment of it here below.

c) *Ontology* is the teaching concerning the inmost essence or underlying substance of reality. It treats of the relations between the natural and the supernatural world, the mutual influences and interpenetrations of bodies, souls, or spirits. It speaks of conversions, transformations, transfigurations which take place far below the level of consciousness or the will — which are real transubstantiations. The Continental Reformation rejected the ontological view of the Christian life *in toto* so far as man in the state of grace (i.e., on this earth, in the body of this death) is concerned, and stated that any application of ontological categories in that area was an unjustifiable anticipation of heaven, a “theology of glory” which did not apply to man’s *real* condition here below. It asserted that the Christian life was ever and always a continually-renewed response of the will of man, in the conscious decision of faith and obedience, to the actual presence of the Word of God, speaking when and where God pleased, but not determinable or appropriable by man. The Catholic Church maintained that the operation of the Divine upon the human here below was an ontological one, which began in the Church and in the believer the

process of transformation of his inmost being which would be completed in the state of glory. The Christian life was essentially a *metousia theou*, a transubstantiation, a communication to the believer of the *theia physis*, the divine nature (as St. Athanasius put it). This did not mean a denial of the actual and the eschatological elements; but it did mean a subordination of them to the essential transformation which was both the ground of any expression of the Christian life in overt acts, and the beginning of glorification.

It is already quite clear that the two views of the Christian life which we have been confronting with one another presuppose different views of human personality and of the relation of the grace of God to it, and that they issue, the one in the kind of Church life which centres in faith and the preaching of the Word, the other in the kind of Church life which centres in worship and the administration of the sacraments. In fact, the Calvinist system and the Roman system are the only consistent developments from the one and the other.

As regards the *presuppositions* of the two views, the contrast may be quite shortly indicated as follows: — The effect of sin upon man, created in the image of God, is for Protestantism the production of a radical contradiction between the Creator and the creation, and for Catholicism the production of a discontinuance of the influence of the supernatural upon the natural. The redemption effected by God is thus in the one case a re-creation, in the other a restoration. And man, the object of the redemption, is considered by Protestantism in personal terms, so that the mode of the redemption must be that of a revelation to persons; whereas he is considered by Catholicism primarily in natural terms, so that the mode of the redemption must be that of a supernatural influence upon human nature. In its descriptions of the new life, Protestantism makes use exclusively of Biblical terms such as revelation, the promises of God, faith and the obedience of faith in hope and love; and it rejects, as foreign to the Revelation and calculated to obscure and falsify the truly personal nature of God's dealings with man, all terms such as "the supernatural", drawn from the onto-

logical sphere, which Catholicism often uses in its descriptions of the Christian life. Two entirely different conceptions of personality underlie the two doctrines; and they issue in the Protestant view of the Christian life as a life in the actual and real certainty of faith and hope in the promises of God (which are eschatologically already fulfilled in the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world), and the Catholic view of the Christian life as a life in the substantial security of the Divine presence and influence *ex opere operato*.

All this underlies the difficulty felt by Anglo-Saxons and Continentals in understanding one another. For the typically Anglo-Saxon Reformation — the English one — did not mean a complete rejection of all ontological categories in relation to the Christian life, but only a partial one, which the Anglican Communion is steadily engaged upon revoking at the present time; whereas the Continental Reformation, of which the Scottish Reformation and English Nonconformity are heirs, did mean that complete and irrevocable rejection.

When Anglo-Saxons and Continentals meet, the central elements in the life of the believer and the life of the Church are described in different terms: the Anglo-Saxons speak of worship and the liturgy, the Continentals speak of faith and the proclamation of the Word. It is only after much labour of spirit, however, that they come to realize that this difference of language represents the fundamental difference which we have endeavoured to describe, between the ontological and substantial on the one hand, and the eschatological and actual on the other.

Once the Anglo-Saxon has discovered this cause of the difference, he at once attempts, not a compromise, but a synthesis of the two views. — After all, Catholicism is a *complexio oppositorum*, and it does not deny the eschatological and the actual, but only gives them what it considers to be their due place in relation to the other truths which it contains. — And he is genuinely puzzled when the Continental replies with great decision in the negative to his overtures. Here is an illustration.

When I was still a theological student, I conducted a long discussion with an Anglo-Catholic friend concerning the

nature of the Presence of our Lord in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. I described the traditional Presbyterian view, that our Lord is *really* present in *the sacramental act* which constitutes the whole Service, but that His presence is not localized in the sacramental elements. To that my friend replied that he did indeed realize the importance (too often minimized in Catholicism) of that point of view; but that he for his part must also affirm the presence in the elements "in a quite definitely different way"; and that he could not see why this further step should not be taken by all.

At the time, I did not understand the full import of taking, or refusing to take, this further step. Now I see that that is the sacramental expression of the fundamental *decision* which fixes the great gulf between the Catholic and the Protestant. That decision is: EITHER to affirm *both* the ontological presence (in the sacramental elements, the believer while in this life, the Church militant) *and* the eschatological — with the emphasis heavily upon the ontological: that is the decision of Catholicism; OR to affirm *only* the eschatological and actual presence, and to deny the ontological as a fundamental misrepresentation of the mode of the justification and reconciliation given to man by God: that is the decision of Protestantism. It is of the essence of Protestantism to make positive affirmations; but its affirmations are exclusive, with the exclusiveness of truth; and it dare not surrender that "one-sidedness", for that would be to surrender the truth committed to its charge.

And so it is really a *decision* which confronts Christendom: a decision as between the "both-and" of Catholicism and the "either-or" of Protestantism. A clear understanding of this issue is the necessary pre-condition of any fruitful work for "Christian unity". For humanly speaking, it seems that either the Christian unity to be sought after, or expressed more fully in life and work, in faith and order, will be the ontological unity of "heaven on earth", expressed in the hierarchy, the liturgy and the dogma of the Church; or else it will be the eschatological unity of a Church which is above all conscious that it lives between the times of the Ascension and of the Second Coming (so that the ontological

ground of its life *is hid* with Christ in God); that while present in the body it is absent from the Lord; that it is saved by a hope which is unseen, until the consummation of the ages, when the great change will take place; that the promises of God are without repentance, so that the hope of its faith is sure (and indeed fulfilled, since eternity is prior to the time-process, and the coming age really preceded the present age!); and that its task is to wait, to watch, to witness in the Spirit (who is the first-fruits of the glory which shall be revealed in it), so that it may not be found sleeping in the Day of the Appearing of its Lord.

The "oecumenical conversation" must continue. It is the gift and calling of God to Christendom in our day. But it will take place rightly only if we who engage upon it have not only a deep sense of the tragedy and sin of false doctrine, heresy and schism, but also an agonizing insight into the *impasse* in which all human thought and effort at reconciliation is involved; so that we are all together brought to seek the reconciliation which God alone can give, and to pray that the Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, may descend upon His Church, that we may be enabled to build the old wastes, to raise up the former desolations, to repair the desolations of many generations, through Jesus Christ, Crucified, Risen and Ascended, the Power of God and the Wisdom of God.

Catholicism and Protestantism

A Catholic Viewpoint

FATHER M. J. CONGAR

(To see ourselves, and our own Church tradition, through the eyes of another, is often a humbling, and always a salutary experience. And the two articles which follow, on a comparison between Catholicism and Protestantism, are offered in order to help us to do so. The utterances of their authors concerning each other's traditions must, of course, be taken, not as a finally-valid analysis, but as a description of what they see when they look at each other from outside. There is undoubtedly a certain amount of misunderstanding in what they say; but much light is thrown on the vital issues. It should also be remembered that these articles represent, in fact, the beginning of a conversation. If the discussion is continued, it will lead to a revision of the picture of the other confession, and possibly a good deal further.)

Two speakers cannot either speak for, or speak about, the whole of Christendom in so small a compass. There are many who will not be able to accept in its entirety what either of these speakers says. But they too will be able to derive benefit from listening to the speakers, if they do not remain merely impartial observers, but descend into the arena of discussion, and themselves wrestle with the fundamental issues raised in its course.)

It is necessary to begin by pointing out the danger of a comparison of this kind. There are two chief dangers. The first danger is that of reducing Protestantism to a single coherent doctrine, and, if that doctrine is Barthianism for instance, to deduce everything from the position it takes with regard to the *analogia entis*¹. I for my part believe that

¹ I.e., with regard to the Catholic view that conclusions with regard to the Divine nature may be drawn by analogy from the natural world as it is. Barthianism denies this; but there are other schools of thought within Protestantism which would not do so. (*Translator's note.*)

Protestantism cannot be reduced to Barthianism alone, and that theological liberalism also has a historical and logical right to make use of the name of the Reformers. The second danger is that of giving Protestantism a consistency which it does not possess, by making it a single coherent body, opposed to Catholicism, but similar to it in nature and in specific gravity. Now, that is not so, in virtue of the statements made concerning the first danger. The very considerable differences in *theology* which exist within Catholicism are not to be compared with the varieties or oppositions in *doctrine* which are inherent in Protestantism. (For the difference between *dogma* (which is one) and *theologies*, cf. the work by P. A. Gardeil, *Le Donné révélé et la Théologie*, published by *éditions du Cerf*.¹)

If we keep these dangers in view, and seek to avoid them, we may, however, make a very instructive comparison between the affirmations of Catholicism and Protestantism concerning some of the main fundamental truths of the Christian Revelation. We shall take these truths one by one.

The New Creation

Catholicism affirms that the new creation (*kainé ktisis*) has truly begun, although it awaits and calls for its fulfilment. It is not merely held in promise by faith, but real, given, receivable and practicable by men, in virtue of the grace of God.

Protestantism affirms that man is not at present ontologically transformed; he is so only in the power of Christ and in the promise which he applies to himself by faith. Thus there does not exist any created super-nature, human in its mode, set within the world without being of the world, given to man without coming from man, a super-nature which

¹ Dogma may be defined as the authoritative affirmation of the Church concerning revealed truth, and theology as the attempt at a theoretical interpretation thereof. The former is universally binding; the latter is not necessarily so. The point made here is that Catholicism is united in its authoritative affirmations concerning revealed truth, and differs only as regards non-obligatory theoretical interpretations; whereas Protestantism contains far-reaching divergences in its most central affirmations concerning revealed truth, and not merely in their interpretation. (*Translator's note.*)

could be the beginning of the Kingdom and of the new creation. — This negation of a *super-nature*, of a created order which is in one sense intermediary between God and man, leads inevitably to a reduction to one or other of the two realities present, namely God or man. *Liberalism*, which, while introducing other interfering elements, is linked up with certain positions of the Reformers, issues in a *reduction to man*. *Barth*, on the other hand, affirms a *reduction to God*. Throughout all the rest of this survey we shall therefore have to treat these two tendencies separately; and at every point we shall observe the working out of this reduction to one or other of the realities which are both maintained by Catholicism.

Revelation

Catholicism affirms that the new creation is announced in a Revelation which is an objective and historical fact, in which God has unveiled to us something of His mystery, to the contemplation of which we can apply ourselves on the basis of faith.

Liberal Protestantism affirms that the Revelation is an inward and personal fact, — the Word of God to the moral conscience. The substance of the Revelation is not a determinate intellectual content, but a *spirit*. It is thus to that spirit alone that we must remain faithful, by making it animate our action.

Barthian Protestantism affirms that the Revelation is an act of God. The Word of God is God Himself, who is never an object but always a subject. Revelation is not as it were a purveying of Divine truth formulated in human terms by means of analogy and offered to the faith and contemplation of man so that he may live thereby; God is not thus given to man and to the knowledge of man.

The Bible

Catholicism affirms that the greater part of Revelation is consigned to writing, the Bible being as such, purely and simply, the Word of God.

Liberal Protestantism affirms that the Bible is only a privileged document embodying the successive revelations of God to mankind; it is not as such, purely and simply, the Word of God, but a privileged stimulant, which has more or less normative value for the religious consciousness.

Barthian Protestantism affirms from its point of view that the Bible is not as such, and in itself, Word of God, but that by means of which God speaks, if He will.

The Incarnation

Catholicism affirms that the new creation is realized by the Redemptive Incarnation, which is a true coming of God (Second Person) into our humanity.

Liberal Protestantism affirms that Jesus Christ is a man whose religious consciousness was unique, and whose realization of our relationship to God as to a Father was supreme and transcendent; He lets us know that God is more a Father than a judge, and that is Redemption.

The affirmations of *Barthian Protestantism* at this point are still obscure to me.

The Church

Catholicism affirms that this new creation is the Church herself. The Church is the reality of the new creation wherein one lives a new life, and is given a new birth of water and of the Spirit (a new life which is not a mere renewal of moral inspiration, but a new ontology¹).

Thus there is an immanence of God in the world of men, — which further amounts to a taking up of man into God, — which is the substance of the Church, and which is bound up with the historical and objective facts of the Revelation, the Incarnation and Whitsuntide. So the Church is the reality of the Lord present by His Spirit (not only His inspiration, but the gifts of the Spirit) — the reality of the Lord truly with us, speaking, sanctifying and sacrificing Himself, living and present as the Living One.

¹ I.e., renewal of the spiritual *being*.

Liberal Protestantism affirms that religion is an inward thing. This would logically lead to the conclusion that there is no Church (cf. letter of Harnack to E. Peterson, in *Hochland*).

There is an immanence of God in the world and in man; but that immanence is a natural reality, an immanence of God in human consciousness.

The immanence of God in the world is, then, personal and inward. Any institution, any intellectual definition, any external form of worship, may well be a necessity connected with the fact that we are human beings, but is in reality foreign to that immanence. There is no "authority" external and superior to the religious consciousness. The Church is only the resultant or the sum of the moral life of religious consciousnesses; it is at their service and stimulates them, but that is all the Word and ministry that it in fact contains. Jesus is present in humanity by His spirit, by His words; in that sense He lives in us, for we live by His *Message*.

Barthian Protestantism affirms that the Church is the place where God intervenes, where there is obedience to His Word. Its whole function, which is indeed a necessary one, is to show the Cross, to draw attention to the Word.

It is not the City of God on earth. There is no descent of Eternity into time, no immanence of the Divine life in the world. (The Incarnation itself is as it were incessantly at a tangent to the world without entering into it.)

The Church is not the very reality of the present Lord; it is under sin, and may be unfaithful; it is only the place where the Lord speaks if He pleases and as He pleases, where He sanctifies if He pleases and as He pleases.

The Visibility of the Church

Catholicism affirms that, since the Lord is thus in the Church and acts thus in the Church *visibly, perceptibly* (because *in conformity with the human mode of existence and action, which is perceptible, collective, social, and thus organized*), His Word is *magisterial*, His sanctification is *sacrament*,

His presence is sacramental, a sacrament whose spiritual reality (*res*) is the unity of the mystical Body by the eucharistic grace. And so the ecclesiastical realities are sacramentally the presence and the action of the Lord who is King, Priest, Doctor.

Liberal Protestantism affirms that all the visible side of the Church, dogma, sacrament, hierarchy, is only the purely human form in which men are driven to express as well as they can, but imperfectly and merely symbolically, the spirit of the Christian *Message*; and so it is a variable, entirely relative expression. But the substance of Christianity is "spirit"; it remains the same under all the forms which are adventitious and accidental to it.

Barthianism affirms that the Church is necessarily visible, because it is human and is in itself only human. Its visibility is not the visibility of a Divine thing really given and realised humanly, but that of a human thing whose whole *raison d'être* is to be a sign showing the way of faith and obedience to God. The preaching of the Church is only a human testimony, offered in fear, and at the same time in the hope that God will indeed speak. The ecclesiastical realities are not the reality of the Lord and of His continued and visible action.

The Christian Life

Catholicism affirms that since this reality of the new creation, which is the Church, and which is also sanctifying grace (*pneuma Christou*) is a reality in the world, in humanity, there results therefrom the reality of human action rooted in grace. We are a tree grafted with a Divine graft, the grace of the holy humanity of Christ; we produce fruits (real ones) of Christian life, of the Christ-life (reality of the mystical body).

Hence there follow three different aspects of the Catholic doctrine of the Christian life.

First, difference between sins : "*secundum materiam, id est objectum* "; distinction of mortal and venial sins, doctrine

on the penalty of sin, satisfaction (the communion of Saints), indulgences.

Secondly, the life of charity in us, life of this seed and growth of the Christian life; theological study of this growth, and elaboration of a whole spiritual doctrine: asceticism, good works, monachism; means of perfection; spiritual direction; mystical theology, etc.

Thirdly, *merit*, i. e., the efficacious faculty, which the Divine seed set in us has, of producing Divine fruits, the supreme fruit being Beatitude, where God Himself, and nothing less than *He*, gives Himself to us completely.

Liberal Protestantism would perhaps make affirmations somewhat similar to those in the first paragraph of the Catholic affirmations; but it would make them from a *moral* point of view, that which we receive from Christ being (only) a new inspiration, the light and the support of a *Message*.

By virtue of a certain spiritual realism, there are, among the liberals, affirmations externally quite similar to the Catholic ones; but the real content is very different. This holds good as regards the whole of the Catholic affirmations, with an admixture of reaction: liberalism is opposed to the Catholic theses by reason of historical antecedents and persisting prejudice.

Barthian Protestantism says *No* to the whole of the Catholic affirmations. It affirms that human nature is corrupt, and that there is no possible passage of the Infinite to the finite: God is where man and the world are not. There is no affirmation of God, no glory of God, but in the negation and the judgment of all that is human, all that is of nature, all that is finite.

The only sin is disobedience or infidelity; sin is to be estimated solely according to the principle on which the action took place; and all sins are equally mortal, being our rebellion against God. The only "work" is faith. Good works proceed naturally from the believer. With Luther, all the substance of our relations with God seems to be set in faith; charity has regard to our neighbour and is identified with devotion. "Works" are passionately rejected; for "works" serve only to give man confidence in himself.

There is no merit ; for salvation is the work of God alone, *in this sense*, that the fruits of salvation and beatitude are given by God eschatologically, without proceeding also from the holy life of a nature, issuing from a grace grafted in it already here below.¹

Protestantism and Catholicism

A Protestant Viewpoint ²

Pierre MAURY

From the Catholic side, it is always objected to any comparison between the Catholic faith and the Protestant faith that it is difficult to refer to a sufficiently constant and sufficiently accredited body of doctrines in the Churches of the Reformation : the famous "variations" do not only appear as the sign of the Protestant heresy, but also hinder a rigorous examination and a real confrontation. There is *one* Catholicism, it is said ; but there are *several* Protestantisms of which it is not easy to discover the common principle.

From the Protestant side, conversely, when one attempts to define Catholicism and to define one's own position in relation to it, one is hindered by the comprehensive breadth of the Roman structure, by the claim of the Catholic Church to include in its doctrine and practice apparently irreconcilable elements, by the ever-open possibility of completing and correcting a rigorous doctrine, not only by subtly modifying it, but by adding to it divergent elements.

¹ This whole article was originally typed out in three parallel columns corresponding to the Catholic, the Liberal Protestant and the Barthian Protestant affirmations. It will help readers to grasp the continuity of each set of affirmations if they will read them through separately. And it should be kept in mind throughout that the author's purpose is to show that while Liberal Protestantism reduces the new creation to an immanent human process, and Barthianism reduces it to a transcendent Divine event, Catholicism avoids the errors of both while maintaining the truth of each in its *complexio oppositorum*. (*Translator's note*.)

² Cf. Introduction, page 142.

These difficulties, really and sincerely felt on both sides, must not be finally determinative. We must not shelter ourselves behind them in order to refuse to make a confrontation which is possible after all, and which is the first step of oecumenical obedience in both confessions.

From the Protestant point of view, we ask only that our Catholic friends do not invoke the doctrinal inconsistency manifested in fact by the Churches issued from the Reformation, in order to neglect the very real consistency of the Reformation itself. The incontestable tendency of the present-day Protestant Churches to return to the affirmation of the sixteenth century should suffice to show that a doctrinal consistency really does exist for them. This consistency may be shrouded over during longer or shorter periods, but it is attested by the very vigour of these returns to origins. Every dogma, every Church contains possibilities of *heresy*. But so long as the heresy has not definitely replaced the orthodoxy, it has only the negative effects of making the essence of the orthodoxy appear, and of stimulating its revival. Protestant Modernism, a heresy of the Reformed faith, may by its very existence enable that original faith to be defined, at the same time as it constrains the Churches where it has developed to return to their primary vocation. (Whether it is legitimate for a Church to shelter heresy in its bosom as liberally and as long as orthodoxy, and whether in that case it still remains *one*, is another question, to which we shall return in our examination of Protestantism, in treating of the notion of the Church.)

In this memorandum we shall speak of Protestantism so far as it knows itself and desires itself to be faithful to its sixteenth-century origins.

*
* *

The accessory differences between the two confessions, which have long nourished cruel polemics on both the Protestant and the Catholic sides, must be left on one side, or at least be traced back to the fundamental oppositions from which in the last analysis they proceed. These fundamental oppositions may be brought up in different domains ;

but they all imply an essential and radical divergence, which concerns the conception of the relations possible between man and God, whether they be the relations of nature or the relations restored by the Redemption in Christ, and thus the reality of the Church and the life of the believer in the Church.

We shall not try to expound the two points of view and then compare them, but simply try to define the doctrinal attitude of Protestantism in face of Catholicism, to bring out the real "*non possumus*" which it opposes to Catholicism, and the reasons for that "*non possumus*".

I. For the Protestant, the Cross of Christ, the expiatory death of the Son of God, attests and announces the radical fall of human nature; it thus defines the meaning and the scope of the story of the Fall in Genesis. If Christ has died in our place, that means that we are truly "dead in and by our sins" (Col. ii. 13; Eph. ii. 1). If Christ really underwent dereliction by God in our place, that means that we are really separated from God. This extremism of the Redemption operated by the initiative of God defines and proclaims the extremism of the original revolt. We are "without hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12). There can thus be no question of any fulfilment of nature — even of a part of nature — by the saving grace. — The Cross is a condemnation of nature just as much as it is, together with the Resurrection, a Divine initiative of restoration, a promise of Resurrection. This radicalism of the Fall — which is known, not directly, by experience, but solely *by faith* in Christ crucified and risen — has not only destroyed in the natural man all possibility of not sinning, in all his acts and all his being, but has also annihilated all capacity of knowing God, even partially, outside Jesus Christ.

Now this Divine Revelation of the Fall seems to us injured or even ruined by Catholicism when it considers grace as the fulfilment of nature. For it, there is a natural possibility of knowing God in His works, that is to say in the created world, without the necessity of any intervention of grace: "*Deus certe cognosci potest*", nay, more, "*demonstrari potest*". Even the Revelation of grace, that which

requires faith, is not *contranaturalis* but *supernaturalis*. There is continuity between *ratio* and *fides* as between *natura* and *gratia*. From the true metaphysic to natural theology, from natural theology to supernatural theology, the passage is a normal one, even if it cannot be carried out without the aid of God. To put it otherwise: the soul is "naturally Christian", and the Revelation does nothing but develop and fulfil its latent inherent powers.

* *

II. This essential divergence is of necessity found again in the conception held of the saving work of God. For Protestantism, the Redemption is essentially "reconciliation", that is to say, a merciful and free act in which God imputes to the guilty a righteousness which he does not possess, considers him "in Christ", absolves him because of the merits of Christ alone; — for in the eyes of God, Christ alone can "merit". So long as we are here below, before the Resurrection, we shall be nothing but these pardoned sinners, regarded as righteous by God; we have need of a total absolution, never acquired, always freely renewed. (*Semper peccator, semper justus, semper paenitens.*) Hence grace is always a *free act* of God, which has its origin only in the unfathomable Will of God and the depth of His Love — because in man nothing calls it forth or can condition it. Grace, whether it be justifying or sanctifying, is a work done for man, in man, by One who is other than man, without man's ever being its author, collaborator, or possessor. It is always Christ who is "our righteousness" (I Cor. i. 30), "our peace" (Eph. ii. 14). Salvation here below is always remission of sins, faith in Christ, and not a recovery of original integrity or of even partial innocence. It must always be said of grace that *it is done to us*, never that *we have it*.

For Catholicism, on the other hand, it seems to us that salvation is above all a *restoration* of nature. Doubtless this restoration is the work of God, of His pardon accorded in Christ; it cannot be carried out without the initiative and

assistance of grace. But this initiative is only the *continuation* of the primary initiative of Creation (there is no "new creation" in the strongest sense of the word), and this assistance presupposes and demands at every instant the human effort which it comes to assist. More: the restoration is substantially operated, ontologically realized in the new man: in him, grace has become part of his human nature, it has been incorporated in him. It is an acquired and practicable grace. Just as our being had remained by nature capable of God, so it has now been made capable of good works: we produce "fruits meet for repentance" in the sense that they no longer have need of being pardoned. Grace becomes a *super-nature* of man, instead of being a merciful decision of the Divine liberty.

This capital distinction is constantly giving rise to misunderstandings and erroneous judgments on both sides.

a. The Protestant who reproaches the Catholic with his doctrine of salvation by works fails to understand that these works are the fruit of the regeneration of the believer, and that they are thus in the last analysis imputable to the redemptive work of God. The Catholic who accuses the Protestant of having simply transferred — in a dangerous way — the notion of works, of having made faith into the only saving work, forgets that this faith too is not a work of man, that it too is ceaselessly created in the unbelieving heart by the pardon of God, and further, that it saves us, not in that it is *ours*, but in that it recognizes the grace which *God* gives to us; finally, he forgets that for the Protestant faith is *obedience*, and that works are not the consequence but the form of faith.

b. On a second point, it seems to us that the Protestant criticism does not distort Catholicism but denounces a heresy which it does indeed contain: that is, an attempt at a *theologia gloriæ*, — the pretension to go beyond the limits of our condition, to confuse the creature and the Creator, the sinner and the Divine Holiness, faith and sight. Catholicism would thus be an illegitimate anticipation of eternity. It is true that the Catholic objects to the *theologia crucis* of Protestan-

tism that it makes the reality of regeneration disappear, does not to justice to the notion of "newness of life", of new creation, and, in a word, ruins the assurance of salvation. To this the Protestant replies that "Christ in us is the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27): nothing but hope, but a sure hope; that the word of reconciliation is not pronounced any the less for being nothing but a promise of redemption; and that there is more reality in a word and a promise of God than in an experienced modification of our nature. He replies also that our new life is "*hid with Christ in God*", a fact which does not prevent Christ from being "our life" from now on. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4).

*
* *

III. Finally, this great divergence appears fully in the doctrine of *the Church*. For the Protestant, the Church is the community of those whom God calls to salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. This vocation from on High, recognized by faith, which is the response of obedience, constitutes the only *reality* of the Church. The Church is *visible* in the sense that it calls together (visible) men by *visible* signs (preaching of the Word and administration of the Sacraments); but it is *invisible* because He who calls it together is God Himself by his (invisible) election in Christ, and because this election ordains us to Christ, who is the Head (heavenly and invisible) of this body (earthly and visible). The Church in its invisibility thus depends *at every moment* upon the act of mercy which it announces and of which it is the object. It can be recognized only in its *signs* and by *faith*. It lives, *not by itself*, but upon the grace which is given it, which it confesses, and which it preaches.

The members of the Church are thus those who look "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" (II. Cor. iv. 18), those who confess their sin and their faith, those who are awaiting their deliverance from "the body of this death" (Rom. vii. 24), those who live upon the Divine *promises*. They are never installed in the

Church, they hear the vocation of the Church. Will it be said that then they are never assured in the Church ? That would be true if that assurance had to be based upon anything else but the Word of the Lord of the Church. But that Lord is faithful, and His faithfulness is an unshakable assurance. — The Church, for the Protestant, is thus the community of those who await that which they do not have, but who are sure of what they are awaiting and in that sense have it already; the community of those who, knowing Him who has come, pray with faith : “ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ”.

It is in the light of that doctrine that the sacraments of the *Real Presence of the Lord* must be interpreted.¹

For Catholicism, it seems to us, the Church is *the continued Incarnation*, the extension of the person and the work of Christ. In virtue of this, and in herself, she is infallible, possessor of the Divine grace and mediator of salvation. She does not have need of the grace which she announces and distributes ; she is really Vicar of Jesus Christ. All this amounts to saying that while she is human in her sensible appearance, she is Divine in her essence, that she has at her disposal — by a Divine decision — wisdom, authority and the love of God. Hence it follows that those who belong to the Church, who accept her rule, who submit themselves to her discipline, who practise her sacraments, are in this communion made participants in the *Divine* nature ; that their humanity is not only assumed but ontologically renewed; that the blessedness of eternal life is only the fulfilment of

¹ This conception of the Church under the Cross (the community of those who confess at once their sins and their faith, who submit themselves constantly to their Lord and can never rest in themselves) explains in part why the Churches of the Reformation show a tolerance which to the Catholics is inexplicable towards the heresy and the heretics in their midst. For the Reformation, there is never *possession* of truth, even in the Church and by the Church; there must be in the Church only a common will to submit itself to truth as it is announced in Holy Scripture; in this sense, heretic and orthodox are constantly submitted to a judgment passed on them all. Of course there are still limits, and the Church's *Confession of Faith* marks them. But it is not astonishing that in the Churches of the Reformation the exclusive character of these limits appears less strongly than in a confession where doctrinal infallibility is claimed for *the Church herself*. What we have here is not agreement to tolerate error but humility which constantly feels the need of being taught.

graces already received, experienced by them, the end of a development already substantially begun in them, the expansion of their holiness.

The Catholic Church does not live upon a promise which is given her ; she is the *fulfilment* of that promise, and confers its graces to those whose Mother she is.

*
* * *

There are many other fields where this essential divergence could and ought to be pointed out. It may appear paradoxical, for example, that no reference should be made in these notes to the definition of the organ of Revelation, notably of Holy Scripture and Tradition. But it seems to us that these oppositions, while considerable, are nevertheless secondary, and depend upon the fundamental opposition which we have pointed out. For everywhere and always the question is to know whether a human reality (book, visible institution, elements of the Sacrament, baptized believer) can be or become a participant in the Divine nature ; whether grace transforms nature or pardons it ; whether redemption is ontological or eschatological.

One frequently hears it said on the Catholic side that Protestantism is a pure pessimism, or, in theological terms, the exclusive and thus heretical accentuation of the dogma of original sin ; the consequence of that heresy being " to believe that grace does not give life " (Maritain). The Protestant, for his part, objects to Catholicism, in Anselm's words, "*nondum considerasti quanti ponderis sit peccatum*" (thou hast not yet considered the full gravity of sin) ; the consequence of that heresy being that grace is no longer the grace of God alone, and is thus no longer really " grace ".

The Essence of the Oecumenical Movement¹

L. A. ZANDER

The question of the oneness of the Christian world and the reunion of the churches presents an extremely difficult and important theological problem, the answer to which naturally takes a dogmatic form. In addition, however, to the theoretical solutions of the question, the church life of the present day provides us with a number of facts which cannot be a matter of indifference to theological speculation. Those facts are not accidental events, but actions of the Church, bound to be taken into consideration by everyone who recognizes that developments within it are the expression, not of abstract principles, but of the actual, though mysterious, life of the body of Christ.

The present article is concerned with the analysis of these facts subsumed under the name of the Oecumenical Movement. My purpose is not to proclaim that which ought to be, but to interpret the data before us.

But what may we regard as data? What exactly is the objective reality which we are to interpret?

The answer to these questions will determine both the subject and the method of our inquiry. At first sight the subject seems very vague, and the mere statement of the purpose we have in view does not define it. Attempts at a *rapprochement* between various Christian denominations and at the re-union of the churches have been made throughout the history of Christendom, but of recent years something fresh has happened in this connection. A new era which may be described as that of spiritual intercommunion between Christians belonging to different denominations has begun.

The new feature lies in the fact that the Christian consciousness of the different churches has begun to recognize

¹ This article consists of extracts from a longer article on the theology of oecumenism, which contains a very valuable statement on proselytizing which we are sorry to have to omit here.

the divided state of the Christian world as a sin, whereas in the past the state was recognized almost as normal. This gives rise to the longing for unity and to attempts at a *rapprochement* which find expression in the so-called Oecumenical Movement, embracing numerous organizations often hardly connected with one another, but inspired by the same spirit and purpose. The Movement includes the work for uniting the Christian churches in deeds of mutual help and love (" Practical Christianity " or " Life and Work ", briefly known as the Stockholm Movement); the attempts at bringing the churches closer together on dogmatic grounds (" Faith and Order " or the Lausanne Movement); the effort to extend Christian principles to international relations (World Alliance for International Friendship through the churches); various Christian organizations among young people (the World's Student Christian Federation, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, etc.).

In spite of the differences in their methods and immediate aims, all these organizations must be regarded as one whole. Although they are not united formally, there exists between them a unity of spirit, and this justifies us in speaking of them as of various manifestations of a single Movement. This is confirmed by the fact that frequently the same persons take part in the different movements, and that most of those who are active in the senior organizations had once belonged to the junior.

The limits of the Oecumenical Movement are very vague. Certain aspects of it presuppose a highly developed sense of responsibility to one's church and a keen awareness of the dogmatic content of one's faith, while in other respects the sole criterion of belonging to the Movement is the desire to take part in a work which bears the name of Christ. Hence the membership of the Oecumenical Movement includes all kinds of people ; we may find in it not only Orthodox hierarchs, Anglican bishops and Protestant pastors, but also representatives of liberal theology who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ, Unitarians who deny the dogma of the Trinity, and Quakers who do not accept any church organization whatever. It is therefore perfectly natural that many

representatives of the strictly canonical consciousness in the different churches deny the very possibility of oecumenical intercourse, and regard it as a danger to the clear and definite dogmatism, essential to the integrity of a church.

Facts, however, prove that these fears are unfounded. In so far as the Protestant world takes part in the Oecumenical Movement, its dogmatic consciousness unquestionably grows and develops, and its attitude to religious truths becomes better defined and more responsible; and the Orthodox mind is constantly urged by its contact with other denominations to give a detailed and well considered answer 'concerning its hopes', thus becoming more fully aware of the inexhaustible richness of the Orthodox faith, and learning to serve its holy tradition with more understanding.

But apart from this educational significance of the Oecumenical Movement, which justifies it from the historically ecclesiastical point of view, it cannot be a matter of indifference to us that the Movement has already become a fact in the life of the Orthodox Church. Although the initiative in this work belongs to the Protestants, the Orthodox Church has responded to their friendly call, as is shown by the mere fact of the Orthodox hierarchs being present at oecumenical congresses, and by the members of the Church taking a permanent part in the activities of the Movement. This does not, of course, involve any kind of religious compromise, but it indicates an attitude of approval towards the Movement as a whole. It means conscious participation in the attempt to establish mutual understanding between Christians of different denominations and to bring them closer together. While taking part in oecumenical congresses, blessing their members and *praying* together with them, the Orthodox hierarchs do not apply any religious tests to them or impose any conditions. This determines the Orthodox attitude to the Oecumenical Movement, and makes it incumbent upon its Orthodox members not to repel the Christians of other denominations by the strictness of their confession, but on the contrary, to find ways in which the Orthodox faith and piety may deepen the spiritual life and increase piety in the Christian world as a whole, making it more churchconscious.

The participation of the Orthodox Church in the Oecumenical Movement is a decisive and favourable answer on the part of the Church of Tradition to a question full of difficulties and ambiguities, and is a fresh proof of the intuitive genius of Orthodoxy, which humbles its reason before the inscrutable decrees of Providence, and recognizes in the life of the Church, not merely a form of service established once for all, but also the unfathomable mystery of the prophetic utterances of the Holy Spirit.

However vague the dogmatic content of the Oecumenical Movement may be, it is definitely associated with allegiance to the name of Christ. In this respect, even its 'extreme life' is radically different from the so-called 'religious conferences' and movements based upon 'faith in God', 'primacy of the spirit', 'moral unity', and similar attempts to unite or bring closer together different faiths *apart from* their relation to Christ. *The Oecumenical Movement is a Christian movement.* Its Christian character is not only the basis of its growth and development, but also the necessary condition of our participation in it. Whereas Eucharistic communion is thinkable only within the confines of one and the same church, communion in the Lord's Prayer is possible and natural for all Christians taught by the Son to pray to the Father. Common prayer with non-Christians is inadmissible, because "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (I Tim. ii. 5) is absent from it; and as to religions which deny a personal God, communion with them may be called anything you like, self-concentration, meditation, intuition, but not prayer. In Europe this distinction may appear abstract and scholastic, but it is of the utmost importance for missionary work, which must be ruthlessly cleared of any kind of religious eclecticism. Representatives of Orthodoxy may fearlessly intermingle with the most extreme Protestants; but their attitude with regard to religious intercommunion with the heathen can only be defined by the first verse of the first Psalm.

Passing from these general remarks to the analysis of facts, we find that we are in danger of making two kinds of mistake. If we confine attention to external facts, we can

easily reduce our inquiry to a mere chronicle of congresses, discussions, resolutions, etc. All these data, however significant they may be, by no means express the essence of the Oecumenical Movement, which is a certain religious *reality*, although human speech may be powerless to give it a concrete expression. On the other hand, if we dwell upon the psychological experiences which accompany those external facts, we may fall into the opposite extreme, and widen our field of inquiry so that it will include purely subjective hopes and ideals and unrealizable projects.

The solution seems to me to consist in determining in each case the *religious significance* of the particular fact in question. Thus, for instance, the proceedings of a particular congress may be the turning-point in the history of church-consciousness, or they may prove to be merely so much waste paper. Similarly, a religious experience at an oecumenical meeting may be a purely subjective impression and after a time disappear without a trace, or it may give a definite direction to our conscious will and become a creative force in the life of the Church. What is important is not a given fact as such, but its significance for the Church, its value and influence within the whole.

From this point of view we have to deal, not with the external facts of oecumenical history, but with the spiritual reality behind them which constitutes their essence. It naturally finds expression in human experience, but it is not limited to the subjective sphere.

If we turn now to the testimony of those who take part in the Oecumenical Movement, we generally find that it has one common feature : there is a startling discrepancy between the value which they attach to their experience, often speaking of it with enthusiasm, and the extreme poverty of its content, or at any rate their utter inability to express the fullness of it in words. They describe their experience as a miracle, a revelation, almost a new birth ; but when questioned as to the content of that revelation, they answer with what may appear as platitudes or self-evident truths. And when, as a result of intense spiritual work, men with high theological qualifications joyfully declare that " they recognized their

brothers of other denominations to be Christians", it is clear that they are referring to some deeper reality than a mere recognition that members of other churches¹ also profess the Christian faith.

This discrepancy between the content and the valuation of the oecumenical experience brings us face to face with the very essence of the Movement. In what follows I will refer to it as the 'oecumenical process', meaning by this, not historical or psychological facts, but the spiritual reality which underlies them.

In what, then, does that process consist, and what is its nature? In order to answer this question, let us consider the relations which may obtain between Christians of various denominations. Those relations may be of three types.

In the first place, we may be conscious of another person's Christianity (or, rather, know that he calls himself a Christian) and remain absolutely neutral with regard to him. In that case his Christianity will be a purely external characteristic, a kind of label, recognized by our intellect only; it will not affect our spiritual life, or call forth any reactions on our part. There will be no living bond between us; we will remain completely alien to each other and have nothing in common. Such an attitude is wrong and profoundly disquieting from the Christian point of view; but it is only fair to say that it is typical between Christians of different denominations, who *as Christians* are absolutely indifferent to one another. In the language of hypocrisy, this spiritual emptiness is usually called 'tolerance'.

Secondly, we may be conscious of another person's Christianity and take up a negative attitude towards it. When interconfessional differences are put into the foreground and recognized as essential and fundamental, other denominations become 'heresies' which repel us and have to be combatted. This attitude is a slight improvement on indifference, because it contains, though indirectly, a certain admission of unity: in order to be a heretic one must be a

¹ I use the term 'church' throughout in its general sense, i.e., as meaning a religious community united by the oneness of faith, prayers and sacraments, apart from its relation to the One Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Christian; a heathen cannot be a heretic. In the history of the Church, this attitude (no less common than the first) has found expression in religious wars and persecutions; at present it expresses itself in all kinds of proselytizing.

Thirdly, it is possible to be aware of the Christianity of other denominations, not as of a mere verbal formula, and not as a distortion of the truth, but as of men's real and living connection with God, as their personal devotion to Our Lord Jesus Christ. If we regard it in this way, we naturally feel a profound sympathy with it which cannot be regarded as a mere subjective experience or a purely personal reaction. If a Christian, to whatever denomination he may belong, and however much he may be in error with regard to the true doctrine, personally turns to Christ and has living communion with Him, then, in accordance with the faithful promise of Our Lord (John vi. 37), he becomes a son of God, and our brother. This brotherhood does not depend upon our understanding, agreement or feelings. It is *given* us as rooted in the spiritual nature of things, in the fact that one and the same Spirit of adoption calls in us "Abba, Father", and testifies to our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. viii. 15), and therefore brothers to one another. The external confession of this brotherhood is the Lord's Prayer, common to all Christians, in which we call God *our* Father.

Christian brotherhood, however, is more than the consciousness of belonging to one family, to the one flock of Christ. It includes other objectively-real elements which make it of the nature of a living union.

Every Christian who stands in a living relation to Christ and fulfils His commandments bears His image (John xiv. 20-24; Gal. ii. 20). In that sense it may be said that all Christians are bearers of Christ. To what extent they bear His image depends both upon the degree of their personal holiness and upon the objective content of their beliefs and sacraments, upon all that the participation in this or that ecclesiastical body gives one; but the fact that they do bear it is a spiritual reality, and to deny it would mean to fetter the freedom of the Holy Spirit and to limit Christ's love for those who call upon Him (John iii. 8, vi. 37). Every Christian is

a bearer of Christ ; this truth is not a theoretical postulate of faith, but an expression of actually seeing Christ's image in our brother. But to see Christ in a person means to love that person ; such love, directed upon the inmost depth of a man's being, upon that metaphysical aspect of it in which a man ceases to be merely human and becomes a likeness of God, is not simply an emotion, but is a true revelation of a reality generally concealed from us both by our sins and by dogmatic errors.

These considerations may help us to understand the true significance of the apparently meaningless phrases by which those who take part in the Oecumenical Movement describe their spiritual experience. If all the richness and fullness of that experience is expressed by the simple statement that " they have seen Christians ", these words must be understood literally. They have seen that which has been hidden from the eye ; with a new inner vision they perceived the living bond which unites their brothers to God ; they understood their prayer, they felt their hearts' tremor ; and instead of the dogmatic formulae of comparative theology, they saw the light of loving eyes and of hearts full of faith. And this vision filled their minds with the greatest awe and joy ; for there is no greater joy for man than to see his brother in God.

The image of Christ which every Christian bears becomes manifest — *christophoria* becomes *christophania* : such is the brief formula which defines the essence of the oecumenical process.

If all this is true, there naturally arises a further question as to the significance of these experiences for the Church. It may be asked, are they not purely personal and connected with the individual righteousness of particular Christians, objectively real, but not forming part of the church ? Our answer must be an emphatic negative, not merely because we want to remain throughout on a strictly church-basis, but from the very nature of things. In the religious life the church is never a derivative product or the sum of righteous individuals. Just the contrary : the church is prior to the personality, it nourishes and forms its spiritual image. In

that sense every Christian bears within him the principle of the church and embodies the image of his own church. This follows both from the mystical considerations about the essence of Christianity and from the psychological and sociological facts with regard to man. Hence it may be asserted as a matter of principle that there is no such thing as Christianity apart from the church. Individual Christians may not be conscious of belonging to the church, and indeed may deliberately strive for pure individualism, but they cannot alter the laws of nature and of grace, according to which the church is prior to the individual, the whole is prior to its parts, the body of Christ is prior to its members.

In the present context this must be understood to mean that the image of Christ is embodied in every Christian relatively to the possibilities which his church-life provides. And just as we speak of 'the Russian Christ', so we may speak of the Dutch, the German, the Protestant, the Anglican, the Catholic Christ, and so on. The history of mysticism and of painting proves this beyond any doubt.

What has just been said must not give grounds for misunderstanding. It is obvious, of course, that Our Lord Jesus Christ in Himself is one and the same always and for all. But the ways in which His image is embodied may vary in accordance with the historical period, place, people, denomination, etc. And if it be pointed out that in spite of the spiritual gifts which the Lord has bestowed upon all peoples, particular denominations distort His image owing to the errors in their doctrine, I would answer that a face disfigured by a scar does not cease on that account to be a divine image, and that we may love, not only the classical lines of faultless beauty, but the fullness of human nature with all its errors, faults and sufferings. In the oecumenical life, the piety of individual Christians reveals to us the soul of this or that church, and we become aware of what is best and eternal in its content, namely, of its living love for Christ and its striving to embody His divine image.

Our oecumenical love is, then, directed upon a church as its object; and the same thing applies to the subject of that love, i.e., to ourselves. In so far as we are rooted in our

church and are not isolated units but bearers of church-consciousness, the love and understanding which are given to us in oecumenical communion are given, not to us as individuals, but to our church. This suprapersonal character of our oecumenical relations is both a unquestionable fact and a supreme task to be realized. It is a fact, because outside the Church there is not and there cannot be any Christian life, and consequently, to be with Christ, to know and to love Him, means to be in the Church, to share in the love of the Bride for her Heavenly Bridegroom (Rev. xxii. 17). But although we thus embody the principle of the Church in ourselves, we are always apt to distort it by personal additions of error, isolation, self-centredness and sin. Hence follows the duty of striving to be in perfect accord with the mind of one's church, of strictly and conscientiously examining one's convictions, feelings and emotions, and of willing that all the expressions of our spiritual life should express the will and reason of our church.

Thus it may be said that in the Oecumenical Movement there takes place a true meeting between the churches: they come to know one another in the fullness of their earthly forms and differences, and are conscious of themselves as rooted in one and the same principle of divine love. This is not, as yet, their union, for everything that divides them remains in full force; but in that meeting they carry out the Lord's commandment of loving one another and abiding in Him through that love. And in this lies the absolute value of the Oecumenical Movement, which makes it, in a sense, an end in itself, quite apart from the question whether it will lead one day to an actual union, or remain a series of events in which the unity of the heavenly Jerusalem is anticipated in the manifold visions of Christ's image embodied in separate churches.

The oecumenical communion has then an eschatological character, and leads to the moment when God will be all in all. But apart from these hopes, it is eschatological in its very nature, for it sees Christian churches and their members in the light of divine glory, in the power and beauty of its image of Christ, anticipating the state in which "we shall be

like Him, for we shall see Him as He is " (I John iii. 2.). In this sense it is profoundly in keeping with the spirit of Orthodoxy, which, more than any other church, sees the beauty of God's creation and glorifies the image of God in man. The glory of the world to come sheds its light on our earthly life, and those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, as they listen to the heavenly prelude, anticipate in joyful contemplation the eternal bliss of the kingdom of God. Oecumenical love, understood as the underlying reality of the relations between the churches, implies certain theological and practical presuppositions necessary for its realization. Thus it implies the recognition of denominational differences and abstention from proselytizing. These two principles are mutually exclusive and can only be reconciled through the miracle of the oecumenical unity which transcends the limits of logical thought.

The denominational principle cannot be understood as merely a differentiation of Christianity. The so-called 'branch-theory', according to which all the churches are one-sided expressions of universal Christianity which includes them all, must be rejected definitely and once for all. That theory denies the value of dogma, considers church doctrines as purely relative, and recognizes no essential difference between truth and error. In opposition to it we must decisively proclaim the belief that our own church contains absolute truth, and that all deviations from it are distortions of the Christian teaching. But we must not forget for a moment that members of other denominations take up exactly the same point of view with regard to their doctrines — which is perfectly right and proper if we recognize their existence at all. The oecumenical problem thus paradoxically combines mutually-exclusive principles, and there seems to be no way out of it. And yet the slightest attempt at compromise either destroys the very essence of oecumenism or replaces its tragic but gracious conflicts by the indifference of a vague idealism.

A few concluding remarks should now be made about the religious nature of the Oecumenical Movement and its position among other spiritual realities.

Every religious phenomenon necessarily comes under this or that article of the Creed, which embraces the fullness of spiritual achievements. It would seem at first sight as though in the case of the Oecumenical Movement the determining category should be the faith in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, for the principle of the Church is both the starting point and the goal of the Movement.

But on closer inspection we find that although the conception of the Church certainly determines oecumenical relations, it is not the force which inspires oecumenical love. In its historical existence, the church always appears as an institution in which the grace of the Holy Spirit is given to the faithful through the definite forms of established sacraments and holy rites. Hence canonical and liturgical rules, established priesthood, and regular forms of religious worship, are characteristic marks of church life.

These categories are scarcely applicable within the Oecumenical Movement. Its essential feature is freedom : not the superficial freedom which regards itself as independent of the law and is purely arbitrary, but the inner freedom which seeks to hear the voice of God when law is no longer sufficient. If the Protestant churches obeyed only their canonical rules, they would never have appealed to other churches, frequently hostile to them. If the Orthodox Church followed its canons only, it would never have responded to that appeal. To make oecumenical intercourse possible, creative daring and inspiration were required ; its moving force is Christian freedom — a certain proof of the presence of the Holy Spirit (II Cor. iii. 17).

The bishops and priests who take part in the Oecumenical Movement do so in their prophetic rather than in their hierarchical capacity. It is clear, of course, that their priesthood is inalienable from them ; but in their oecumenical work they act not as representatives of ecclesiastical power or as dispensers of grace, but as preachers and confessors freely proclaiming the word of God. The prophetic calling, which is not opposed but complementary to the priestly, manifests itself here with exceptional power. It is nurtured by the depths of church life, it draws its form from the wealth

of holy tradition, but in its essence it is a free and creative service of the Holy Spirit, who gives new life to the Church in its new achievements.

Both in its loyalty to church tradition and in its eager hope of new revelations, the Oecumenical Movement is inspired by the ever-living words of the Creed : " I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father... who spake " *and is speaking* " by the prophets ".

Can Oxford speak to our Condition ?

John C. BENNETT

The significance of the Oxford Conference can be thought of in two different ways. It may be looked upon primarily as an episode in a long development of oecumenical cooperative thinking out of which in time may come a new crystallization of the Christian message to the modern world. Or it may be regarded as having great importance in itself as the one occasion on which there is a chance for the Church to say a word which is God's word for the present crisis of the world's life. If we take the first view, the Conference will be very much worth all that has gone into it. Viewed in relation to the remarkable preparatory process which has been going on for several years, it will be a creative moment in which the Church will receive real light for its own life and thought, and perhaps it will be the occasion of many rather intangible experiences of spiritual unity deeper than differences out of which the universal Church will become a living reality for those who share those experiences. We must be prepared for a situation in which the value of the Conference can only be realized in such terms.

But it will be a tragic commentary on the state of the Church in our time if the significance of the Conference goes no further than this. Here in 1937, with the Church facing greater adversaries than ever before in its history since the

first centuries of the Christian era, with humanity threatened by vast moral and spiritual perversions of its life, with the world hovering on "the rim of the abyss" of suicidal war, it would be sad indeed if Christians gathered at Oxford were not led to do or say anything which is more than a platitude or more than the revelation of their own confusion. It will be another decade before this opportunity will come again, and that very decade may decide great issues which will determine the fate of a generation.

There is one ground for hope that something decisive will be said at Oxford which, as the Quakers say, "speaks to our condition". That is the growing realization that there is a contradiction between the content of the Christian affirmations about God, the world and man on the one hand, and the new philosophies which on a large scale control the thought and lives of men on the other. For example, when it is seriously maintained that the revelation of God for our time is Adolf Hitler, cannot we see new and sharper meaning in the Christian affirmation that God is revealed in Christ, which all Christians share even when they differ in their theories of revelation? Differ we inevitably will in regard to the form in which Christian truth appears. Differ we inevitably will in emphasis about the content of Christian truth. But is it not conceivable that to a greater degree than has been true in the past it will be possible to make a few common affirmations which get their importance for our time because they correct the particular forms of error and perversion to which our generation is most tempted?

In this article an attempt will be made to suggest one view of what those Christian affirmations should be.

The Affirmation of the Christian's first Loyalty to God

Christianity begins and ends with the affirmation that there is no object worthy of the supreme loyalty of men short of God upon whom they depend for their existence. Any theory of the world which leaves God out is a caricature of the real world. Any object of loyalty which takes the place of God — whether it be the nation or the state or the leader

of the state, whether it be the Communist utopia or any other human cause or ideal whatsoever — is an idol. About that fundamental position there can be no debate among Christians.

But the debate begins at the point where we seek to determine what loyalty to God means in terms of human conduct. Americans do not have far to go for illustrations of the fundamental issue at stake here. A few years ago, a distinguished theologian, Dr. Douglas Clyde Macintosh, applied for American citizenship but made the reservation that he would not support the state in war unless, in the particular case, he believed that to do so was in accordance with the will of God. Notice that in this case the question of pacifism did not arise. He did not deny that there could be just wars, but he did affirm with the representatives of most branches of the Church that some wars are unjust and against the will of God. The United States Supreme Court by a vote of five judges against four refused citizenship to Dr. Macintosh because of this reservation in regard to war. But here is the important point. The majority of the Court in refusing citizenship admitted that American citizens should acknowledge "with reverence the duty of obedience to the will of God"; but they went on to say that for practical purposes the will of God could not for the citizen conflict with the will of the state as declared by act of Congress. Now this is the loophole which in practise makes many of our protests of religious loyalty ethically meaningless. It is comparatively easy for Christians to say that the state is ordained by God, that in these complicated matters of international relationships the state must know what is best, and that it is presumptuous for the Christian citizen or even for the Church to pit against the judgment of the state any interpretation of the will of God as discovered in the Bible, in the teachings of the Church, or in the conscience of the individual Christian. But to maintain that position is to make an ethical surrender which really destroys obedience to God where it is most difficult and where it is socially most significant, and it is to encourage the development of a nation which does not have within it persons who bring the judgment of

the Christian conscience upon the national conduct; this is to deprive the nation of the salt without which it soon loses its savor.

The God of the Bible is clearly enough the God of the public order as well as the God of the Church and of the individual soul. The God of the Bible has a will for the nation. He spoke through prophets who unhesitatingly put the state under judgment in the light of his will. To separate religious idolatry from ethical disobedience in public life is to return to a pre-prophetic form of religion. The only real test of religious loyalty is an ethical test; and the norm by which this test must be made is not to be found in any act of Congress or any Government decree, but in the Bible interpreted in accordance with the mind of Christ. The development of the totalitarian state is a challenge to the Christian conscience, not only because it interferes with the freedom of the Church to order its own affairs and to control its own theological teaching, but also because it demands of the Church submission to the will of the state in the ethical decisions of Christians which have vast consequences for the public order.

The Affirmation of the Universalism of Christianity

The universalism of Christianity is both a theological affirmation and an ethical demand. It is the affirmation that God is the God of all humanity, that before him all our barriers of race and class and nation are unimportant in comparison with our common humanity. It is the demand that the Christian obligation to respect the worth and seek the welfare of persons can stop at no such barriers. Much of our discussion of this subject is vitiated by a completely perfectionist conception of love. Love as we know it at its best in intimate relationships cannot be a demand which is relevant to the relationship of an individual to all humanity. But to admit that is not to say that there are no aspects of Christian love which do apply to all relationships. There are at least two such aspects. One is the recognition of the worth of all persons regardless of the human group to which

they belong. The other is a genuine concern that all persons have the same opportunities which any one of us desires for himself and his children. Now, in varying degrees those two aspects of love are humanly possible; and to use the fact that a more perfect love which is only suitable in intimate relationships is impossible in all relationships as an excuse for neglecting these primary obligations of the Christian life is a preposterous theological trick by which the consciences of Christians are befuddled. Whether one calls those two aspects of love which are socially relevant "love" or "justice" is a verbal matter, but if they are called justice let them not be reduced to a level which is so sub-Christian that again the use of a word becomes the cause of vast moral obfuscation.

To speak of Christian universalism would once have been a platitude. But in the modern world it is no platitude; and if Christians agree on that and really mean it both theologically and ethically, they will be running counter to the most characteristic perversions of our time. In bearing witness in season and out of season against exclusive nationalism and racialism they will actually be revolutionaries in the contemporary world. This witness underlines the Christian's refusal to give supreme loyalty to the state. The universalism of liberal humanitarianism which was so promising a few years ago has broken down. The universalism of Communism still exists only in theory. There is more hope from the universalism of Christianity because it is both an affirmation about God and an ethical demand and because it is embodied in a Church which with all its weaknesses is a clearer guarantee of the unity of humanity than any other institution.

The Affirmation of the Economic Imperatives in the Christian Religion

It is true that in this field we enter more difficult ground. It is more difficult in part because of the entanglement of the churches with the existing economic system in every country. It is also more difficult because of honest differences of opinion as to the precise relationship between the ethical

and the technical in the economic problem. That is one area in which the Oxford Conference can well break new ground in the thinking of Christians. An attempt will be made here to summarize what seem to me to be the affirmations which Christians can make as Christians about the economic order.

a. *The importance of the economic basis of all life.* Christianity has been called the most materialistic religion in the world, and there is ground for that suggestion, because of the place which has been given by Christianity to the body, to bread, to the material substratum of existence. In spite of some influences in the direction of an ascetic dualism between matter and spirit, Christianity never capitulated to it, and that is one of the reasons for the adequacy of Christianity for a world which is wrestling desperately with the problem of economic security.

b. *The social responsibility implied in the Christian ethic of love.* Again I must warn against those perfectionist interpretations of love which make it irrelevant to social life. Whatever words we use to identify it, unless there is genuine concern for the welfare of all persons, concern which goes to the length of demanding a social order which makes possible for all the opportunities which any one of us claims for himself and his children, love is a mockery: and *that concern is in varying degrees a human possibility*. To deny that it is possible on theological grounds, and by subtle means to permit Christians to evade the plain social responsibilities involved in Christian love, is a theological rationalization of acceptance of the *status quo* by which Christians bring Christianity into contempt.

This social responsibility, taken seriously, would make it impossible for Christians to tolerate its human results of Capitalism as we have known them even in a country which is supposed to be as prosperous as the United States. As President Roosevelt himself has said repeatedly, one-third of the nation exists "ill-fed, ill-clothed, ill-housed". Indeed one can say that in the United States the economic system is run for the benefit of the top third of the people and the

bottom third are its victims. Christians for centuries have sung :

“ He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
And hath exalted them of low degree.
The hungry he hath filled with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away.”

In putting those words to music they have failed to realize what they mean in relation to the actual economic order under which they have lived. A large part of the tragedy of the modern world is summed up in the fact that Christians sing those words and do not mean them; whereas radicals sing the words : “ Arise, ye prisoners of starvation ”, and mean them.

c. *Self-knowledge which brings socially relevant repentance.*
One of the perennial contributions of Christianity to the problems of any social order is the fact that it calls men to self-examination and repentance. The Church in the modern world at least has made very little attempt to bring the economic life of men into the range of Christian self-examination and repentance. But we now are beginning to see how necessary this is. It means in practise that the Church would help its own people to see how far their social philosophies, political loyalties, opinions on controversial issues are dictated by the narrow economic interests of the groups to which they belong. It means that the Church would deliberately set itself to tear down the façades which shield its people from awareness of this fact, façades of convenient but out worn economic theories, façades of false patriotism, façades of loyalty to established institutions which are identified with law and order, and often with the sanctities of religion. Each country has its own façades with which its privileged class covers the nakedness of its own economic interest and convinces itself that its interest is the general interest. If the Christian call to repentance cannot break through these protections by which the soul shields itself from the knowledge of its most anti-social forms of selfishness, then is Christianity truly helpless to tame the economic life of men. This is

one place where the Church can take hold and clearly remain within its own province.

d. *The incompatibility between work in the present economic order and Christian vocation.* It is a part of the message of Christianity that the common life of daily work should be a life of obedience to the divine call. The Church, in view of this fact, can remain within its own sphere and at the same time point out that in the present order it is the exceptional job which can be filled by Christians with this sense of vocation. Millions have no work at all. Most workers work directly for the profit of owners and only indirectly for the common good. Millions work to produce goods which are useless, shoddy and destructive. The vast rearmament programs of all the great powers mean in practice that many branches of industry in every country are geared directly or indirectly to the production of munitions, and as a result the work of countless Christians is at present from any wide perspective anti-social. Moreover, the whole pull of the present economic system is to lead those who do not work for the profit of owners to work primarily for their own profit.

The Affirmation of the Contradiction between Christianity and War

Of all the questions with which the Oxford Conference will have to deal, the question of war will be the hardest. One reason why this will be so hard is that those who will advance the clearest position against all war will be regarded by those who cannot follow them as the beneficiaries of a favored national position, favored by geography or by superior economic resources or superior political power.

When Christians gather together to discuss war, they must not lose out of sight for a moment the fact that war forces Christians to perform acts of incredible baseness, treachery, and cruelty. The killing of combatants has been bad enough in all wars, but what can be said of the fact that in another war the chief defense may be air reprisals which will mean the cruel destruction of helpless non-combatants

in the enemy's city ? The hypothetical consequences which are used to justify such acts by Christians are so uncertain and the immediate baseness of the acts is so certain that all facile adjustments of Christianity and war are out of place.

The Christian cannot follow the state blindly into all wars. One of the objects of Christian social thinking at this time should be the attempt to discover objective tests by which to decide between what are called "just" and "unjust" wars, which those Christians who are not able to take the absolute pacifist position may actually apply. One of the unfortunate elements in the Christian tradition is the tendency to sanctify the state as the agent of God in the preserving of order. What is forgotten is that from a world perspective the state is the source of anarchy and in our world of the most destructive forms of disorder. In a contracted world international anarchy bulks larger than it did in the formative period of Protestant thought on this subject. It is therefore a real theoretical advance that such Christian thinkers as the Archbishop of York have come to emphasize the use of force to maintain public law on an international scale. In accordance with this principle, one of the tests for a just war which has been most widely accepted, is that it be a war in the interests of world order under the auspices of the League of Nations. In a world which was disarming instead of arming there would be real standing ground for that position. But at the present juncture it is difficult to imagine such use of League sanctions as more than the occasion for a war between rival groups of heavily armed powers in a further stage of an old vicious circle of defeat and revenge. If we are to have a test for a just war we shall have to do better than that; for Christians who are not pacifists, and who have no such tests, will in the event of war be mere tools of the state.

Christians should be able to see the causes of war and the conditions for peace. It is here that the same removal of façades, the same puncturing of shams, the same call to a realistic repentance to which I have already referred in connection with the economic order is essential. It is just as important that the Christian citizens of privileged nations see through their own motives in so far as they are controlled

by narrow national interest as it is that Christians in the privileged classes see through their own motives in so far as they are controlled by class interest. If the Church can do nothing at this point it must admit its moral helplessness in the face of the threat of war.

Christians should be very sensitive to the frequent failure of force to accomplish any permanent good. They need not be theoretical pacifists to be sensitive to this failure. The fact is written large in recent history; and Christians should be more alert to see it than non-Christians, because force does constitute so serious a problem for the Christian ethic. If only the Christians in the nations which were victorious in the last war would examine with complete candour the effects of that victory upon the objects for which they claimed to be fighting, they would make a good beginning in cultivating this awareness of the failure of force.

I have deliberately avoided the position of absolute pacifism, because I know that it is oecumenically impossible, and because it does have certain theoretical drawbacks, though any other position has drawbacks which are, in my judgment, as serious. But it is of the utmost importance that the Church, in refusing to be pacifist, should not abdicate to the state on the whole war question. The Church must discover a position for which it can stand as a Church, which is accepted on Christian grounds and not on grounds of national expediency or on the basis of a doctrine of the sanctity of the state which does not fit a world in which the state is the source of international anarchy.

THE EDITOR'S TRAVEL DIARY

The Birmingham Quadrennial

The Birmingham Quadrennial had all the features which have made the Quadrennials so important for the life of the British Movement and of the Federation : the sense of " movement ", the world setting of the programme, the devotional atmosphere, the very international composition, the humour, and so on. But it had this time something more, something which made the old timers say: " This reminds me of Glasgow 1921 ", by which they meant that there was a note of urgency and vocation which had not been so prominent in the last two or three Quadrennials. Was it for that reason that the large Continental delegation felt so very much " at home " in Birmingham ? I believe it was. The addresses did not merely paint a dark picture of our time, but confronted us with the certainty of God's presence and action; and so they spoke to all of us, whatever our country or background.

Some of the most revealing discussions at Birmingham took place outside the official programme. I remember especially the meeting about Spain, in which we had a strong contingent of left-wing students from Great Britain, but also students from Germany. It was a real test case for the right understanding of the Federation. In this meeting it became very clear to all present what Robert Mackie meant when he said that the Federation is neither an institution for general international fellowship of the " hands across the sea " variety, nor a movement for the defence of one conception of society against all others, but " a painful proceeding ", as Christians with very different social and political attitudes try to realize their unity in the God who transcends these differences. But precisely because this was made so very clear in many different addresses, a great question emerged, which was only partially answered : What then is the relation between the transcendent loyalty and the concrete choices ? That question is so vital for all of us, and for the existence of the Federation, that we should make it the main theme of our work in these next few years. The Officers, meeting after the Quadrennial, decided that a special number of The Student World should be devoted to it in the very near future.

The two delegations which felt the acuteness of these questions most keenly were naturally the French and German ones. And so they felt

specially drawn to each other, and held several meetings together which to them were among the most important ones of the whole Conference.

The European Council

Thanks to the efforts of the British Movement to get strong delegations from other countries, the meeting of this Council was by far the most representative which has been held in recent years. It was interesting to note that the average age of European General Secretaries is rapidly going down, and that there were so many new faces. Another encouraging feature was that several countries which had not been present at former meetings were now represented. The reports conformed the impression that the European S.C.M.s are in a period of growth, and that the unrest in the University world acts as a stimulating rather than as a discouraging force in their life.

The Council held several joint meetings with the special Federation committee on Missions which was meeting at the same time at Queen's College, and discussed with William Paton how the Federation might take a share in the preparations for the Hangchow Meeting of the International Missionary Council. It became clear that the way in which we can help best is to think out our own particular task of evangelism among students, and to share the results of our thinking with the leaders of the Younger Churches.

A Mission to the University of Geneva

A second mission is more difficult than a first one. This had already become clear in the preparations for the "Semaine Chrétienne Universitaire", and it became even more clear during the week itself. For the percentage of outsiders was smaller than it was three years ago.

But the undertaking seemed nevertheless fully justified. If there were fewer of those who have no touch at all with Christianity, there were many who were in that difficult stage of transition in which they feel partly attracted and partly held back, and with that group very fruitful contacts were made, not only through the main addresses, but especially through the discussions. A new and very important feature was the special faculty meetings, which drew the largest attendance. These provided an occasion for speaking of the specific questions which so often prove the real difficulties in a student's approach to Christianity. And they became at the same time the natural starting-point for the following up of the mission itself, as those students who had become interested in seeking the relation between Christian faith and their

particular vocation decided to meet regularly for further discussion. This is an example which might well be followed in other Universities.

The three problems which came back again and again in the more general discussions were those of the finding of faith, of the "scandal" of the Church, and of the relation of Christianity to politics. These are indeed the real issues today; but what impossible problems they are if one has to deal with them in a few minutes, and before a completely heterogeneous audience! It would be a good thing if in preparing our missions we were always to try to discover what are the most acute questions in a given University, so that we may deal with them quite fully in our main programme.

Among the evening addresses, Roland de Pury's answer to the question. "Why the Bible?" was certainly the most truly evangelistic, because it combined in a remarkable way an original and humorous presentation with sound Biblical substance. Those who can evangelize without "preaching", and who can present the full contents of the Gospel without using pious language, are still rare among us.

A Mission to the University of Utrecht

The Dutch are slow starters, but once they get under way, they are hard workers. Thus, it took the Dutch S.C.M. a long time to decide whether it would follow the lead given by the missions in other countries, but once it had decided, it carried out its decisions with remarkable thoroughness. I do not think that any other mission in which I have participated has touched the life of the University as a whole so effectively as this particular one. Every evening the "Great Auditorium" was overcrowded, and it was very obvious in the discussions that we were truly dealing with students of all sorts and descriptions. The general student organ declared in an editorial that this was precisely the kind of thing for which the students had been waiting. And so much interest was created in the country at large that the main addresses had all to be given over again by radio.

It is difficult to know just what lies behind this sudden and somewhat overwhelming response. Humanly speaking, the preparations had certainly been effective. Much personal work had been done. And to each student were sent two postcard reproductions, chosen from Arthur Wragg's illustrations of the Psalms, followed by a programme which was simply and clearly phrased. But this cannot be the whole story. Something deeper must be going on. Just what this means is difficult to know, since Dutch students are notoriously shy in matters of personal

conviction. However this may be, it is obvious that a very great opportunity has come to the Dutch Movement.

An Anglo-Russian Meeting

At Bièvres, the French S.C.M. House, which is becoming a great centre of student conferences, and which will receive the Federation in August, we had in March a short but intensive meeting of some fifty members of the Russian Movement with Federation members from Great Britain, Australia, France and other countries, under the auspices of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. After an Orthodox Service in the fine chapel, there were interesting addresses and discussions on the significance of the oecumenical contacts between Orthodox, Anglicans and Protestants. It is always a joy to see how seriously our Russian friends take the opportunity which is implied in their presence in Western Europe, of acting as interpreters between the Christian East and the Christian West. And I was therefore glad to have an opportunity of saying how much the Federation owes to them in its whole oecumenical work.

V. 't H.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

The Significance of the German Church Conflict for the Whole Church

The following pages represent an address which Karl Barth delivered in Lausanne in January, and which has appeared in French in the Swiss S.C.M. magazine "In Extremis". Since it was written, the forced resignation of Dr. Zoellner and his Church Committee, and the announcement of new Church elections, have made it clear that the issues of which Karl Barth speaks are more burning than ever. We are glad to publish this article in our Oecumenical Number; for the test of the reality of any oecumenical movement is certainly whether it realizes that both the sufferings and the courageous witness of one Church represent a call of God to all Churches.

Since 1933, the Evangelical Church in Germany has been engaged in the most difficult *controversies*, both internally and externally — internally, with the *error* and *disorder* which have arisen in its own midst; externally, with a *neo-paganism* which is an extraordinary mixture of all kinds of remnants of the rationalistic opposition to the Gospel which was widespread in Europe in the 19th century and at the beginning of our own, together with all kinds of elements from the primeval heathen religions of Germanic antiquity; and finally also, with the new *National Socialist* State, in so far as that State claimed and asserted itself to be the holder of the monopoly for judging all questions, even those relating to the Church, philosophy, morals, and law, and in so far as it openly made the claim: "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods before me!" The German Church conflict is the controversy of the Church with these adversaries during the last four years. This conflict is concerned with the necessary defence of the Christian confession, in which nothing more or less than the existence of the Evangelical Church, the Christian Church itself, is at stake. It is not, however, concerned *only* with a *defence* of the Christian Church; for it has become manifest that this defence was not possible without a thorough *renewal* of the Church, i.e. without a willingness and preparedness for a new knowledge and a new confession of its faith — a knowledge and confession of the *freedom of the Word of God* as over against any and every human interpretation, a knowledge and confession of the *freedom of the Christian faith* over against all the bonds which men would lay upon it.

One thing I would emphasize in passing: This German Church conflict has not significance *only* for the Church. If anything really has significance for the *Church*, then it necessarily has significance for the *world* as well. It is, first of all, quite possible to speak of a *political* significance of this whole event. The assertion so often made, that this conflict is based upon motives which are really political, — motives of reaction — is indeed untrue. But there can be no doubt that the fact of this Church conflict does actually constitute a political event, and that simply because what has happened in the German Church is the only serious event in which there has appeared an open contradiction and resistance against the otherwise omnipotent political power. *Here*, and only here, the National Socialist State has come upon the boundary of its power; *here* it has again and again been compelled to correct and to revoke its attitude. Who would have expected — who even four years ago would have thought it possible — that this Evangelical Church, which then was not a factor of any greater outward significance than it still is with us in

other lands today, would be the place which would in this sense acquire a palpable political significance !

It is truly possible, in the second place, to speak of a *cultural* significance of this German Church conflict. It is a fact that freedom of conscience, freedom of thought, and freedom of speech, are still to be found in the Germany of today only within the Evangelical Church. Unless all the signs are deceptive, we are today at the end of a liberal era, the era of individual and subjective freedom which has lasted now for two hundred years. In that period the Church was the stronghold of the conception of authority and of obedience. It was often enough and sharply enough accused by the friends of freedom for that reason. Today it is more easily possible than formerly to understand what this attitude of hers meant. Certainly not unfreedom. Now, in the last few years, it has become evident in Germany that when an era of authority is advancing, the Church is able to become the stronghold of freedom, without thereby justifying arbitrary licence.

But these things are said only by the way. Anyone who does not see and understand the significance of the German Church conflict *for the Church* cannot possibly have eyes to see truly and estimate rightly the range of its political and cultural importance. There is no doubt that many who at the beginning were interested in this conflict because of political or cultural considerations later became weary and lost interest in it. And that is quite in order. One can see and understand what is really going on here only if one knows how to estimate the significance of this happening for the Church.

The title of this article speaks of the significance of this conflict "for the whole Church". The word "whole" is merely a decorative addition; for any event — even as far away as China — which has significance *for the Church* at all always has significance *for the whole Church*. When a Church is in distress, that is the distress of all Churches, of *the whole Church* on earth. And when a Church is gathering knowledge and making decisions, it is putting questions which are directed to all Churches, to *the whole Church*. And when a Church is living by the promise of God and being granted some sight of the hope which the Lord gives to His own, then a light is kindled in that Church which shines and is seen in all Churches, in *the whole Church*. We here should not be a Christian Church, an Evangelical Church, if we were not immediately touched and moved by what is going on in the German Church, if those events did not have immediate significance for ourselves as a Church also.

I shall present my view of the significance of the German Church conflict for the whole Church under four heads.

1. The significance of the German Church conflict for the whole Church consists first of all in the fact that it is making clear to us that *the very existence of the Christian Church, of the Evangelical Church, is in acute danger today*. This first point concerns something which might also be said in regard to Russia with very little alteration. But that is just the significant thing — that a lesson that we were already able to receive through Russia has now been emphasized and confirmed in such a peculiar way through the events in Germany. Perhaps you will ask me : Has it not always been so ? Could not that also have been said of the last decades and even centuries ? Do we not come out of a period in which man, proudly conscious of the autonomy of his individuality and his reason, was in full revolt against all Divine *bonds*, against the knowledge that he is a *sinner*, against the need for having to accept *grace* and mercy from God, against the possibility and reality of the *Revelation* ? Yes, indeed, it has been so for a long time ; and we have indeed known for a very long time this autonomous, i.e., self-governing man, who appears not to need any Church, any Gospel, any God. I have already said that we are today at a remarkable *turning-point in time*. The time of that proud, self-sufficient man, seems today — if all appearances are not deceptive — to be very nearly at an end ; and in every area of life a world seems to be arising which will be characterized by a *system of authority* and of collectivism, a world of leadership, of control and of mass-thought, of hard and brutal command and obedience. Anyone who still desires to accuse the modern man of individualism, subjectivism, liberalism, comes too late ; he is breaking in open doors ! Today we are in the midst of a transition to principles and to a world-order of a very different character. Even the most insignificant citizen is experiencing that, in the form of “ crisis law ”, which just means the law of command and obedience, and the end of the freedom hitherto enjoyed, and perhaps a crisis of law itself in the sense which that concept has hitherto had. And that which is going on in the areas of economics and of law is accompanied by related phenomena in all areas of the spiritual life. How many people, both high and low, hailed this transition *with joy*, in the hope and expectation that authority and obedience might, as in the good old days, bring respect and order and subordination in their train ! How many have hoped for and expected a *religious* renewal just from this transition ! But something quite different has come ; and the German Church conflict can teach us about it. With this transition to authority and collectivism there has come a *new religion*, a State which is in its nature itself a Church — a Church with all its splendour and all its appurtenances, with all its enchantment of

prophecy and mysticism and worship. Only now, in and with the breaking-in of the authoritarian era, has the hitherto merely negative alienation of the modern man become a *foreign faith*, the consolidated faith of man in himself in his natural and historical conditions, — in his nationality, in his race, in his qualities as supporter of the State, — an absolute, fanatical, intolerant faith which must inevitably come into passionate conflict with the Christian faith, and has indeed done so. How inoffensive the liberal centuries were, in contrast with this ! How inoffensive was free thought, how inoffensive was the secularism so much talked about even a few years ago ! Only now is a threat being launched at the Church, against its substance — now, in the attack against the Church led by another “ Church ”. Only now is the Church confronted with the decisive question, the question of its very existence ; only now has the contradiction against the Church become mature and mighty, only now that it is appearing as a new religion, a new faith, a new Church, in a power like that of Islam with its faith in Allah, who is great, and whose prophet is Mohammed !

2. The German Church conflict has in the second place the significance of *making it clear to us that the Church can resist in such an acute danger, in such a distress*, and not only resist, but even *completely reform, consolidate, strengthen and reshape itself* in the very midst of that danger and distress. Indeed it can. Did we know that already too ? We have all heard the saying that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. But did we really hear it, in such a way that it entered our hearts as truth, so that we knew and were certain that it is so ? The Church *can* resist, the Church *can* become new ? Do we not come out of a period in which often enough a remarkable *fatigue*, a remarkable pessimism and defeatism were widespread even in Christian circles — just in those circles ! — even in ministers’ and theologians’ houses — just in those houses ? ! How frightfully seriously the Christians took *the modern man*, with his thought, with his morality, with his so much discussed and deplored defection from the Church ! How much worry about the maintenance of the Church there has been just in the last few decades ! As though we had to maintain the Church ! How much trouble has been taken to prove to men that the Gospel is a good and necessary thing ! In all that, there was not manifest any very great confidence of the Church in its own cause ; and perhaps that had something to do with the mystery of the lack of success of these well-meant endeavours.

The Church *can* resist. Certainly, the *temptation* which has come upon the Christians in Germany is enormous, sometimes almost overpowering. Certainly, the past *mistakes* of the Church — some

of them indeed very old mistakes — have been bitterly avenged during these last few years. Certainly, there was a great deal of *insecurity*, and in particular, much painful disunity, especially at the beginning of the conflict. But it has also been shown that however sorrowful, indeed miserable, the Church may look, it has not been in vain that during the past centuries the *Bible* was read again and again by so many known and unknown people, and that its content was so often proclaimed, whether well or badly. It has not been in vain that a *Martin Luther* once lived in this same Germany, and it has not been in vain that so much public and private work has been done in all these decades and centuries among the *congregations*. Much seed has now shot up all at once. When the need came, and the danger and the temptation, the Church *awakened* throughout the whole of Germany, after some hesitation and after some heavy defeats; and here and there, some and often many people *dared* to face the political power to which they were subject with a calm, simple and clear “No!”, born out of the “Yes!” with which they accepted the Gospel.

But the Church cannot only say No and resist; it has shown that it has a living power of renewal. It was not the case, and it is not the case, that the German Church is concerned to hold fast the old order over against many kinds of innovations. The danger was too great, and the will of this new faith was much too enormous, for any mere repetition, such as a conservative principle, to be able to resist it. Rather was it the case that just the so-called ecclesiastical conservatives, those (whether of the Lutheran or of the Reformed Confession) who clung to the old at any price, were the ones to compromise. But *something else* happened. Men *prayed* in their distress. The need taught them to pray, and taught them to go back to the *sources* of knowledge of Christian life and Church existence; it taught men quite simply to read the Bible again. It taught them to read it on the basis of the Confessions of the Reformation, and taught them to understand and interpret it anew in the realities of the present situation in Germany. During these years in Germany, something has been rediscovered of the *eternal character* of the Word of God, and that means its contemporaneity with our own time as with others. It has been discovered that the distress of which the prophets and the psalms speak is *our* distress, and that the help which came to them can come to *us*, and that the faith which is proclaimed there can be *our* faith. And so it came about, shyly at first and then more and more courageously here and there, that individual Christians, congregations, and groups of congregations in Synods dared to say the Word of the Gospel, to say it *anew*, in

this dangerous situation, under the greatest pressure from State and Party and police. And so it came about that they dared to set the Church again upon its own feet, after it had lived so long upon the favour of the State and now was all at once deprived of that favour. And lo and behold ! it worked ; and lo and behold ! the theologians had to learn to think in terms of *the Church* instead of abstractly and scientifically, and to see their scientific task in those new terms. And the Church for its part had to see that it must think and act *theologically*. This movement led to a renewal of both.

3. The general significance of the German Church conflict consists thirdly in the fact that *it has made it clear that the Church may live upon Holy Scripture, and that it may live upon Holy Scripture*. I should like to give a short explanation of that. Perhaps you ask me : Is this anything new ? Once again we are dealing with a truth which we think we know. But we know it in rather a different way ; we really know it more as a *law* laid upon the Church. We know that it ought to be, that it ought to have to be the case that the Church lives upon *Scripture* and with it upon the Word of God. It would be fine if it were so ; and the Church really ought to return thither. The German Church conflict has shown us that it is a grace and a freedom which are *allowed* us in that the Church has Holy Scripture as the source of its life. The German Church conflict has shown us that it is not the case that Holy Scripture is after all the traditional bond which has been received from the Fathers, and the text from which the minister preaches, but at bottom an old and outgrown affair — an affair to which one does not give one's heart, but to which one gives a heart which is *also* elsewhere. (But if it is *also* elsewhere, then it is at bottom *entirely* elsewhere !) The German Church conflict has shown us something of the permission granted to the Church that it may live upon *Scripture*. A Church could not well live upon *reason* and *culture* any more in present-day Germany. Reason and culture have become taboo, and other watchwords have taken their place. Neither could the Church live (as many still believe among us here) upon the forces of continuous *national tradition*, the forces of home and soil. It was just under cover of these words that the enemy had penetrated into the Church. And even the Church's *own tradition*, even the memory of the great past, the time of the Reformation, could not help her. In this present time, nothing could be done with memories. Then came a young generation which taught the Church that the most honourable sanctities of the past no longer held good for them. — Thus one thing after another upon which the Church thought it could live in addition to

Holy Scripture has been taken from it. And therein lies a great mercy of God ! *The Bible alone* was left to the Church. But that book, with its witness to Christ, has proved to be the force of the resistance and renewal of the Church.

But the Church may *live* upon Holy Scripture ; that means, it may *make use* of that which the Bible speaks of. It may not only read and admire and marvel at it, it may use it, give effect to it in daily life, in public life. " If I only have Thee, I ask nothing concerning heaven and earth, though my body and soul languish " (cf. Ps. lxxiii. 25, 26). " Yet I remain always with Thee ; for Thou upholdest me by Thy right hand " (cf. Ps. lxiii. 8). The Church may make use of it, not in thought, but in decisions, great and small. Certainly, that had to be learned.

Things were no different in Germany from what they to a large extent still are among us ; many good and sincere Christians still imagined that the faith of the Church was a theory, equipped with which one had to adapt oneself to the way of the world. Now came the time when action was demanded ; now all at once it was needful to act, and to act dangerously, without police protection, indeed under threat by the police ! — no longer to act in conjunction with a well-disposed State, but to deal with a State which desired to make the Church into a temple of idols. After many defeats, the Church has *learned to act*. It worked. Resistance has been offered, and endurance shown. The attempt to instal a Reichsbishop as supreme prince of the Church has been resisted ; the violent attack in the person of "*Rechtswaller*" Jäger has been defied ; and according to the latest news, the third and most dangerous attempt — the appointment of the so-called Church Committees — is in process of being rejected. I am certain that a fourth and fifth attempt will not be lacking, with the aim of constituting the German " National Church " by force. Up till now, the Church, endeavouring to live in obedience to Scripture, *has* resisted these undertakings. And so it has every reason to go in its way rejoicing. Another thing — which is quite simple — has been shown : that it is the most practical thing, simply to hold fast the faith and to obey. The clever and complicated people have had to undergo bad experiences with their wisdom during these years.

4. The German Church conflict has fourthly the significance of impressing upon us, so that we cannot again forget it : *The Church is hidden in the free, almighty and gracious Hand of God*. Did we know that already too ? Of course, we knew these words. But perhaps we did not know that it is seriously meant, that *it holds good*.

You would be misunderstanding me if you were to think that I wished to sing a song of triumph and victory concerning the achieve-

ments and deeds of any human beings — that I wished to praise the German "Confessional Movement". I am not thinking of that. I have seen too many people who failed again and again in this conflict. I have too often been present when lack of counsel and ignorance of what to do next seemed to have reached their height. And in the future also, it will not be possible to strike up a song in praise of the heroism of the men of the Confessional Church, although *much* could indeed be said concerning great courage and sincerity and faithfulness, both in secret and in public.

There can be no question that the German Church will still have to pass through difficult trials and temptations in its fight for its confession; and it is not impossible that it will one day be beaten — whether by internal exhaustion or by external power. — But even if that should happen — that lies in the Hand of God, however — we should even today be able to say and have to say that during these years, in this conflict of the German Church, a higher power has become visible, which rules the Church and holds it and bears it up even in the humanly-speaking most difficult circumstances, even in face of the development of the last and worst possibilities of resistance on the part of its surroundings.

Some weeks ago, there appeared in a Swiss magazine an essay upon the German Church conflict, in which it was stated that ultimately it was only *two* totalitarian claims that were concerned — the claims of the two opponents. And further, it was stated that the claim of the Church was only the over-bold claim to totality of a certain recent theology, and that therefore a free-thinking person in Switzerland would not take too much interest in it. No totalitarian claim, whether from the one side or from the other, could be acceptable to him, the free Swiss, and so the best thing for him would be to pass neutrally between them both. — Very well; he may hold that view. I can only say to him: It is indeed true that two totalitarian claims are concerned. But he is wrong if he thinks that the one side is concerned with the claim of a theology. If a claim upon the whole man is made, that is not the claim of a theology, not even the claim of the Church and its doctrine, not even that of Holy Scripture, but quite simply the claim of *the Lord of the Church*, who is also the Lord of heaven and earth. This conflict is concerned, not with the honour and right of certain people, or with the erection or re-erection of a new or old doctrine with its claim to sole validity, but — without any flavour of party strife — with the recognition of the truth revealed and valid for the whole world: "I, in Jesus Christ the eternal Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, am thy God! Thou art mine; and none shall pluck thee out of my Hand, none shall, none can withdraw

thee from my commandment and alienate thee from my comfort." This confessional conflict in Germany is concerned quite simply with pointing to *this* God as the Lord, not of a party, but of all men and of all things human, as Him who is Judge over life and death, to whom we all owe responsibility, and our life itself, because we are accepted through forgiveness. The thing which was *worth while* in these years was the heed paid to that totalitarian claim, the appeal made to that God, the call made to Him, the prayer of countless faithful hearts which rose up to Him. The force which the Church requires to live by is a force which in this difficult time was really *miraculous*, and miraculously *granted* again and again. And when that hymn was sung — as it has so often been sung in Germany in these years — "Maintain us, Lord, by Thy Word!", then the experience was made that God *does* so when we call upon Him. And then the other prayer might also be made :

" Oh máy this bounteous God
Through all our life be near us,
With ever-joyful hearts
And blessed peace to cheer us ! "

God has granted that prayer. Men have sinned, made mistakes, been defeated, shown themselves weak ; but God has become visible, great and strong, holy and glorious.

And, now, at the end, we ask ourselves how this significance of the German Church conflict for the whole Church is to be made fruitful for us too. I would answer : Here there is nothing to " be made ". Here there is quite simply only one thing : to see and to hear how things are in reality. If we see that, then this conflict is fruitful for us too. It must be clear to us that we cannot stand over against this conflict as observers, as historians, as impartial critics. We all share in this matter, just as surely as we all wish to be believers ; and we have nothing further to do but to hear thankfully, and accept as true, the witness which this struggling Church is giving us. What is before *us* we do not know. That is in God's Hands. Days of decision may dawn for us too. However that may be, we have *today* nothing to do but accept the transforming power of the witness that the German Church is giving us, and then to be cheerfully *prepared*, as people who have accepted that witness. Preparedness is everything. Everything further will be done among us by God's Word *Himself* and by God's sovereignty over the world, to which we may confidently commend the German Evangelical Church, our own Church, and ourselves — every one of us in his own particular life !

Karl BARTH.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Birmingham Quadrennial

GOD SPEAKS TO THIS GENERATION. Being some of the addresses delivered at a Conference on International and Missionary Questions, Birmingham, 1st to 7th of January 1937. *Student Christian Movement Press, London, 1937. Price : 2s. 6d.*

A Conference Report is often a dull thing. This one is not. One senses that God must have spoken there, that something did happen.

"Almighty God, our heavenly Father, Who at diverse times and in diverse manners hast spoken to our fathers, let Thy Word be spoken among us with power at this time, that Thy servants may hear and obey, through Him who is Thy Word made manifest, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

"So we prayed every morning at Birmingham."

Thus the book opens, without any preamble. And the very first thing which strikes the reader is just that : the fortunate absence of "preambles". Every speaker seems to have gone straight to the heart of his subject. There is a directness and centrality about it all ; a will to "hear and obey" ; a will to look at things as they are and not as we would like them to be. "The speakers", says Hugh Martin, "were ruthless in confronting us with the unpleasant realities of our time." Yes, this ruthless honesty, which is one of the fine features of "this generation", must have been one of the dominant characteristics of the Conference. We are faced with facts all along : we are reminded that "once more Christianity has become a minority affair" (Visser 't Hooft on "The Christian West" ; a Chapter to be added to the *Student World* issue on "The End of the Christian Era ?") — We are told that Christians to-day in Manchuria are faced with martyrdom. We are brought face to face with another set of facts : "What it means that God is" ; God in Christ : "set between earth and sky there is a Cross upon which hangs a Sufferer" ; the Church : "this vile body" called before all worlds to be the Bride of Christ.

And all these facts speak ; or rather God speaks through them ; they are to be faced ; a decision has to be made : " our response ".

" I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Town Hall of Birmingham." How many have shared Robert Mackie's vision ? We don't know. But " certainly the Lord was there " ; and where the Lord speaks, things happen.

We " Continentals " have often charged our Anglo-Saxon friends with having a too optimistic view of life. Have we been unfair ? Or is the stern realism of this book, which faces us with a lost world and closes all ways of escape but the way of the Cross, one of the many signs of a new era in our Western Christendom ?

S. de D.

The Two Contrary Truths...

PROPHET AND PRIEST IN OLD ISRAEL. By Adam C. Welch. S.C.M. Press, London, 1936. Price : 4s. 6d.

THE GOSPEL AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. By A. M. Ramsey. Longmans, London, 1936. Price : 7s. 6d.

LITURGY AND SOCIETY. By A. G. Hebert. Faber and Faber, London, 1935. Price : 12s. 6d.

If one decides to approach the question of reunion from the general Catholic standpoint, the two fundamental principles which will guide one's thought will be *Abusus non tollit usum* and (especially) Pascal's dictum : " The two contrary truths ; one must begin there ; otherwise one does not understand anything, and everything is heretical." The very titles of the three books under discussion illustrate both these principles. And their contents carry one a long way in applying them.

First of all, in the field of Old Testament study, we find a Presbyterian scholar contending that the thing which held the national tradition of Israel together was *the cult*, and that priest and prophet, so far from always opposing one another on principle, combined " not merely in safeguarding their people from corruption by a foreign cult, but in purging the cult of Israel from its baser elements ".

Secondly, in the field of New Testament study, patristics and Church history, we find an Anglican scholar endeavouring to expound the meaning of the Catholic Church and its historic order, " not in

legalistic and institutionalist language, but in evangelical language as the expression of the Gospel of God.

Thirdly, in the fields of liturgy, dogma and personal religion, we find another Anglican scholar endeavouring both to give expression to the re-discovery of "the fellowship of the Mystery" which is the great service rendered to the Church by the Liturgical Movement, and also to apply that re-discovery to the conditions of man's life in the modern world.

Prophet and Priest : Gospel and Church : Liturgy and Society : — Is it not one primary need of Christendom today to recover the conviction that these great realities *belong together*, and that what has driven them apart in the minds of many faithful Christians is not their essential nature, but the sinful pride and self-assertion of man ?

D. G. M. P.

The Church in Asia

CHRISTIANITY IN THE EASTERN CONFLICTS. By William Paton.
Edinburgh House Press, London, 1937. Price : 2s. 6d.

William Paton's new book consists of two parts, namely, "Things Seen", and "Reflections", and its great value consists precisely in the combination of the two elements implied in these sub-titles, namely, vivid description on the one hand, and thorough consideration of the deeper underlying issues on the other hand. Only a man who knows the Younger Churches, both through direct personal contact, and through years of study of their problems, can write such a book as this.

Paton's picture of the Churches in relation to their environment is refreshingly realistic, and shows us that the situation of the Church in Asia, like that of the Church in Europe, is a situation of conflict. The Churches in Asia have to face the same problems as the European Churches; but there is this great difference, that in the West "the Church remains a large and massive organization", while in the East "the Church in all its branches taken together is but a tiny thing". Everything depends therefore on the development in the Younger Churches of a strong consciousness that only a militant Church, aggressively evangelistic, deeply aware of its superhuman

calling and of its relation to the Church Universal, can hope to deal with the powerful forces which are antagonistic to Christianity. What this means in practice is shown admirably in the second part of the book, in which a strong case is made for a new conception of the Church and its function in the world.

For those who desire to follow up the discussions at the Basle Conference on Missions, and to prepare themselves for the Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State, and the Hangchow Conference of the International Missionary Council, this book is indispensable.

V. 't H.

Are Barthians Barthian ?

THEOLOGISCHE AUFSÄTZE. Karl Barth zum 50. Geburtstag.
*Chr. Kaiser-Verlag, München, 1936. Preis : Geh. RM. 15.—;
geb. RM. 16.50.*

The forty essays which together form the volume offered to Karl Barth on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday deal with many different aspects of theology. There are studies in Exegesis, in Church History, in Dogmatics and in Practical Theology, and several describe the influence of and reaction to dialectical theology in various countries and Churches. The contributions are not all of the same value, but there are a sufficient number of very good ones to make the study of this volume abundantly worth while.

The Editors explain in their preface that this volume does not pretend to be the expression of a "school of Karl Barth", and remind us of the fact that Barth himself often warns his students against "Barthianism". ("Be a man, and do not follow me.") And the following essays show that those who consider themselves collaborators with Karl Barth, or who are indebted to his teaching, are by no means uncritical disciples in the scholastic sense of the word. Thus this volume truly honours Karl Barth as a Christian teacher, who does not bind his students to himself, but attempts to prepare them for the *Ministerium Verbi Divini*.

V. 't H.

An Introduction to Liturgics

AN OUTLINE OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP : its development and forms.

By William D. Maxwell. *Oxford University Press, London,*
1936. Price : 7s. 6d.

This book, by the chief Scottish Presbyterian liturgical scholar, is of the greatest importance to all those who wish to gain an understanding of Christian worship. Its special significance is that it "devotes a large proportion of the space to the worship of the Reformed Churches, particularly to the early liturgies of these Churches. This has been necessary because of the strange neglect shown towards these liturgies by British scholars, resulting in widespread misunderstanding of a most important period."

The first chapter describes primitive origins, up to the Church Order of Hippolytus (Third Century); the second chapter describes liturgical forms in the East — the "Clementine Liturgy", kindred rites of the fifth and sixth centuries, and later developments in ritual and ceremonial; the third chapter describes liturgical forms in the West — both Gallican and Roman; the fourth chapter deals with the forms used in the Churches of the Reformation; and the fifth chapter discusses the Christian Cycle of Prayer — the Quire Offices, the Christian Year, and some particular forms of prayer.

The detailed contents of the fourth chapter are : the Lutheran Rites; the Zwinglian Rites; the German Rites of Strasbourg; Calvin's French Rites at Strasbourg and Geneva; the Reformed Rites and their successors, first in Scotland and then in England; the English Rite in the *Book of Common Prayer*; the Liturgy in the Scottish *Book of Common Prayer*; Some Modern Liturgies : the Old Catholic, the Catholic Apostolic, the United Church of Canada.

Comment would be superfluous. One can only express one's gratitude to the author for redressing the balance of the study of liturgies by bringing out clearly the importance of the creative liturgical life of the Churches of the Reformation.

D. G. M. P.

A Letter from Walter M. Horton

I am sorry to get from Dr. Visser 't Hooft the judgment that my book on *Contemporary English Theology*¹ is likely to widen the gulf between German and Anglo-Saxon theology. I am sorry to get it, both because I regard his judgment on such matters as uncommonly shrewd, and because I sincerely meant the statement he quotes from my Introduction, about my desire not to widen this growing gulf. I believe, as a matter of fact, that it is necessary for Anglo-Saxon thought to make a special effort, during the next few years, to keep in touch with German thought and carry on a continuous *Auseinandersetzung* with it. In one paper (on "Revelation") which I have written during the past year, my whole endeavor was to see how far I could go toward an acceptance of the views of such men as Barth, Brunner, and Heim, while remaining loyal to the traditions in which I have been born and bred.

In order to maintain relations with German thought, so as to serve the unity of Christendom, it is of course not necessary to be uniformly polite and complimentary in one's references to it. The best compliment that any Christian thinker can pay to any other Christian thinker is to take his thought seriously enough to wrestle with it. I have expressed some of my disagreements with Barth and other German thinkers, not with the intent of breaking off relations with them, but as an episode in a continuing conversation. The circumstances which have led me to express the judgment that American thought should now follow English "rather than" German leadership are the following:

American theology is just now in the midst of an important discussion on the "future of liberalism". It is widely recognized — most of all by former liberal leaders — that the form of Christian teaching which was recently dubbed "modern" and "liberal" in contrast with the embattled conservatism of our "fundamentalists" is not adequate to convey the deeper meaning of the Christian faith to our contemporaries. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick himself, who led the fight against fundamentalism a dozen years ago, now says that we must go "Beyond Modernism". But beyond in which direction? In *Realistic Theology*, I tried to define a direction; and was widely supposed, in spite of my explicit denials, to have "come out for Barthianism". Many of our liberals still seem to suppose that Barth is the representative of contemporary German thought, and that the *only* alternative to liberalism is this "German" alternative.

¹ See *The Student World*, First Quarter 1937, p. 97.

Now I fully recognize that such international comparisons are liable to be grossly misleading because they involve gross over-simplification of the situation; but it seemed to me helpful and important to persuade our timid liberals that the "German" way out was not the only way; there was also an "English" way, which would permit us to advance beyond liberalism without denying all our own traditions.

Theological leadership is not something that can be established or maintained by advertizing; and I should be attributing too much power to books if I supposed that my remarks on German and English theology could greatly affect the historical process now going on. Theological leadership of one people by another occurs when the line of thought struck out by the one providentially coincides — quite unintentionally — with the deepest needs of the other. I believe that there is such a providential coincidence at present between English and American religious thought, as there has been in the past between German and American thought. The coincidence between German teaching and American needs is less, for the present; but that is no indication that German teaching may not be deeply significant for the whole of Continental Europe; and since the Gospel is more truly a world Gospel than it is a Gospel for particular times and places, no geographical boundaries ought to limit our interest in what other Christians are thinking.

Dr. Visser 't Hooft knows that he is hitting me in a sensitive spot when he accuses me of nationalism. I have no desire to be an "American Christian" in a sense analogous to "German Christian". The Christian message is fundamentally one message for the world. But this message requires shifts of emphasis in different times and places, and in every nation needs to be interpreted in terms of the national heritage. The world message of Christianity is enriched by continuous conversation between national Christian movements. I believe America, England and Germany all have contributions to make to such a process, for I believe God has been at work in them all, and there are parts at least of their culture which they can humbly and gratefully dedicate to mankind in the name of Christ.

Notes on Contributors and Articles

JOHN C. BENNETT is Professor of Christian Theology at Auburn Theological Seminary, Auburn, New York. He is one of the most active members of the Council in America which prepares for the Oxford Conference, and a leader of the Student Christian Movement. His books include : *Social Salvation* and *Christianity and our World*.

M. J. CONGAR is Professor of Theology in the Dominican Monastery of " *le Saulchoir* " in Belgium.

SUZANNE DE DIETRICH is Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation, and author of *C'était l'Heure de l'Offrande*, an English translation of which is now being prepared.

PIERRE MAURY is Pastor of the French Reformed Church at Passy (Paris), Vice-Chairman of the World's Student Christian Federation, Editor of *Foi et Vie*, and author of *Trois Histoires Spirituelles*.

J. H. OLDHAM is Chairman of the International Commission on Research of the Universal Christian Council of Life and Work, which is in charge of the preparation of the Conference on Church, Community and State to be held at Oxford. He is the author of *Christianity and the Race Problem*, *A Devotional Diary*, and other books.

DENZIL G. M. PATRICK is Secretary of the World's Student Christian Federation and of the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.s, and Scottish Chaplain in Geneva.

WILLIAM TEMPLE, Archbishop of York, is Chairman of the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order, and will preside over the Edinburgh Conference. His most recent books are *Nature, Man and God* and *Christianity in Thought and Practice*.

OLIVER S. TOMKINS is Secretary of the Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland, and Editor of *The Student Movement*.

L. A. ZANDER is the General Secretary of the Russian Student Christian Movement outside Russia.

The Book-Reviews are by Suzanne de Dietrich, Denzil G. M. Patrick, and the Editor.

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS

A new Book by
W. A. VISSER 'T HOOFT
will be ready in April
NONE OTHER GODS

5s. net.

The author's travels and contacts give him unique opportunities for assessing the trends of thought and life throughout the world. He presents us here with a singularly penetrating diagnosis of the modern situation and a convinced and convincing statement of the Christian cure. The old Christendom is dead; but a new is struggling to be born. Dr. 't Hooft is grimly realistic about the Churches today. He is prophetic and constructive about the Church of the future.

CHRIST AND PRAYER

Ready early April

By C. F. Andrews. 3s. 6d.; paper covers 2s. 6d. net.

The pressure of the external world makes it harder than ever for modern men and women to find retirement and quiet. Yet never was there greater need for the practice of prayer. C. F. Andrews is known and loved in many lands as a spiritual teacher. Here is the ripe fruit, not only of his own experience, but of his understanding of the needs of many who have sought his help. It is based upon a detailed study of the teaching of Christ about prayer.

THE PARABLES OF THE GOSPELS And Their Meaning for Today

By Hugh Martin. 5s. net.

"He interprets them with a really vital sense of their applicability to the ethical problems with which the modern world is most concerned. He takes each of the parables and reveals its timeless truth and relevance."

Christian World

GOD SPEAKS TO THIS GENERATION

2s. 6d. net.

The Report of the S.C.M. Conference held in Birmingham in January 1937, containing addresses by distinguished Christian leaders at home and abroad, including the Archbishop of York, and W. A. Visser 't Hooft.

BROTHERHOOD ECONOMICS

Ready early May

By Toyohiko Kagawa. 5s. net.

Dr. Kagawa outlines in this book "a new way to reach a Christian social order". He believes, and tries to demonstrate, that Christianity, intelligently applied, could solve the acute problems of modern society. He writes out of considerable theoretical and practical knowledge of industrial and commercial life.

58, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1.